

S H E R L O C K ' S
L E T T E R S.

V O L. II.



L E T T E R S
ON
SEVERAL SUBJECTS.

BY THE
Rev. MARTIN SHERLOCK, A.M.,
CHAPLAIN TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE
EARL OF BRISTOL.

FROM GRAVE TO GAY, FROM LIVELY TO SEVERE.

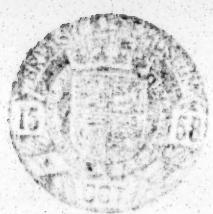
POPE.

V O L. II.

D U B L I N:

Printed for W. HALLHEAD, No. 63, Dame-street;
L. L. FLIN, No. 15, Castle-street; and
P. BYRNE, No. 35, College-Green.

M,DCC,LXXXI.



TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE EARL
OF
B R I S T O L,
LORD BISHOP OF DERRY,
&c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

THE first Societies of London
and Paris praise your ta-
lents and good-breeding. The
first Artists of Italy praise your
taste. All the world praises your
heart.

heart. What then is left for me to say, but that I am, with the warmest gratitude, and with the most profound respect,

MY LORD,

YOUR LORDSHIP'S

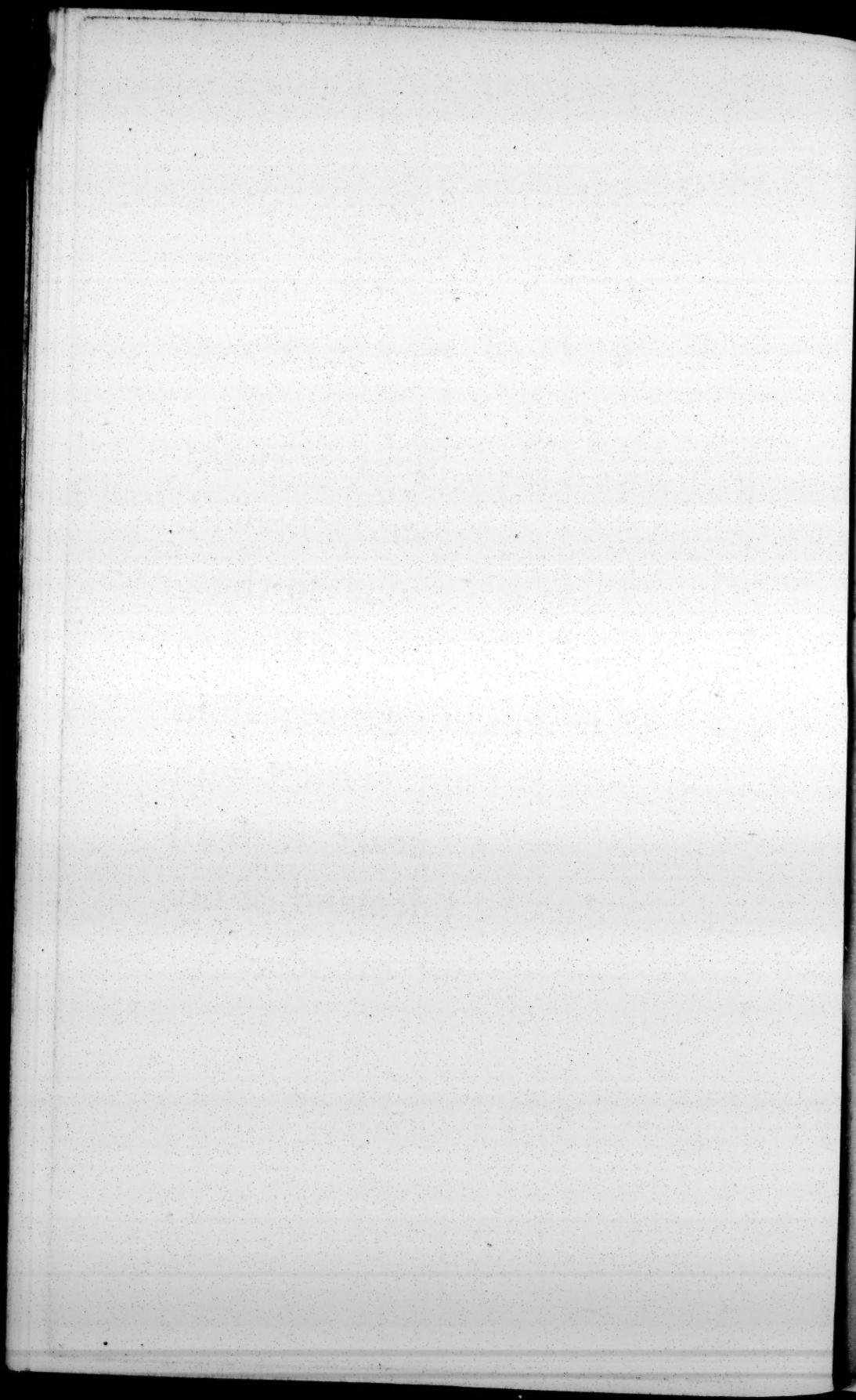
MOST OBEDIENT

HUMBLE SERVANT,

MARTIN SHERLOCK.

P R E F A C E.

I Think a book looks awkward without a preface, otherwise I should not write one to this ; for, in truth, I have nothing to say. I ask no indulgence ; I bid no defiance ; I am, what I wish England was, at peace with all the world ; and I demand of my reader nothing but candour.



LETTERS

ON

SEVERAL SUBJECTS.

LETTER I.

TO MY FRIEND AT PARIS.

BUT why will you not come to London? I am anxious to repay you the civilities you shewed me at Paris. You hate England, but you love the English: I love France as little as you do England; but I assure you I most sincerely esteem a number of your countrymen, and none of them more sincerely than yourself. You will not come, you say, 'till the peace is made. I hope, for *your* sake, we shall beat you; for if we do, you will be better received.

As *Le Roi* is the grand idea that fills your mind at home, so I take it for granted
our

our King is the first object that will engage your attention here. I think I can tell pretty nearly what you will say of him on your return, as well as of our capital. You will let me know after if I have guessed right.

You will say then, that he represents majesty better than any Sovereign you have seen except the Pope. Thus far only you can judge for yourself. The rest of your judgments must be collected from the opinions of the different classes of his subjects. The people here don't flatter; but always give their *worst of thoughts the worst of words*. You may trust their account of him implicitly; and it is indeed a very flattering account for him. They will tell you that he has all manner of good qualities, and no bad ones; that he is humane and pious; that he loves his Queen, his children, and his people; that he is very benevolent, and never did nor said an ill-natured thing; to which they add, that he has no capricious expences, and that he is very temperate in his manner of living. Thus far the people. Men of letters and artists praise him because he encourages genius, and rewards with royal munificence every species of superior merit.

Persons

Persons of rank, who see him nearer, say, that his manners are obliging ; his understanding, solid ; his taste, good ; and that he is possessed of very extensive knowledge.

To all this they add but one shade ; they say he is obstinate. Obstinacy, in the language of courtiers, you know, is steadiness. Where one ends, and the other begins, is not perhaps so easy to determine. The excess of a virtue is generally a fault ; and as the people, who have nothing to hope or fear, and who really love the King, say he is obstinate, you will probably be rather inclined to believe them than the courtiers.

Upon the whole, you will find him a great and amiable Prince ; and you will regret, as I did, that he had not a friend in the No-popery mob to burn St. James's * palace, for he is, without exception, the worst-lodged Sovereign in Europe.

After *le Roi* you will no doubt think of *la Reine*. Our Queen is neither a Wit nor a Beauty. She is prudent, well-informed, has an excellent understanding, and is
very

* It is doing great violence to language to call this building a palace ; it looks like the offices to Marlborough palace.

very charitable. I spent three months in the country where she was born ; and the people there have quick conceptions, and are well natured. Her Majesty has an elegant person, good eyes, good teeth, a Cleopatra nose, and fine hair. The expression of her countenance is pleasing and interesting ; it is full of sense and good temper. She loves domestic pleasures ; is fonder of diamonds than the Queen of France ; as fond of snuff as the King of Prussia ; is extremely affable, very pious, and is praised by all the world at home and abroad.

If you had never seen any capital but Paris, London would appear to you a most magnificent city. Its streets, squares, &c. are infinitely superior to yours. But as you have seen all the great towns of Holland, Germany, and Italy, I do not think London will make many violent impressions on you. It is larger, better lighted, and more convenient for foot-passengers than any city you have seen ; but the ideas which I think will strike you most, are, the goodness of the horses, the richness of the shops, and the shapes, skins, and complexions of the women.

However,

However, if London be superior to Paris in the *ensemble*, it is not so in the detail. You will in vain look here for five hundred palaces, you will not find fifty. You will go to our opera, and you will expect pleasures equal to those you feel at your own. You will be disappointed again. The opera of London is inferior to that of Paris in every respect, except in singing. You will seek a walk as *agreeable* as the *Grande allée* of the *Palais Royal*, and a garden as *splendid* as that of *Tuilleries*. You will find neither. Our park is neither a pleasing nor an interesting walk, and is extremely disagreeable to the feet. You must not, however, say that here; for we are proud of our park. As I know you are sincere, and never speak but what you think, when any one asks you how you like the park, tell them Richmond is charming.

The London Theatres will not enchant you, unless you stay long enough to know our language better than Voltaire did. If you come to understand it well enough to acquire once a relish for Shakspeare, you will think no more of Racine after, than you will of St. Paul's church after seeing

St. Peter's at Rome. It will be eating a peach after a pine-apple.

But if you are not charmed with St. Paul's church, you will with the Pantheon. It is the noblest and finest room in Europe. See it filled, and you will have an idea of the splendor and opulence of the people of this town. When we were at Rome together, you remember there were one night at a masquerade, near the end of the carnaval, twelve hundred people, who paid * eighteen-pence each for entrance, and the Romans talked of it as a mighty matter. The keeper of this room told me there were one night at a masquerade eighteen hundred persons, who gave two guineas a piece for their tickets.

Westminster-abbey will make no great effect on you. You have better Gothic buildings in France. You have also better sculpture than any it contains. But there is not, either in France, or in any other part of the world, a repository of the dead that will interest you so much. It is the Elysian Fields of England, where every class of distinguished excellence has its portion allotted to it. Patriots and Warriors,
Philosophers

* Three Pauls.

Philosophers and Princes, Garricks and Shakspeares, have each of them their place. They seem to stop the traveller, and say ; “Admire a * grateful country, which “honoured us when living, and which “respects our memory when dead.” O talents ! blessed is your lot in every quarter of the globe ; in England it is glorious as well as happy.

The Guards will please you even after those of Potsdam. There are a great many handsome men amongst them ; and they go through their exercise with as much regularity as the Prussian troops, though not near with so much quickness.

But of all the impressions that will be made on you, I believe the strongest will be from a very common circumstance which you will meet frequently in our streets. We have here vocal performers, as you have, who sing verses to the crowd. You will hear them, in those songs, mention the names of the first persons in the ministry, and load them with the most opprobrious language you can imagine. I bought yesterday one of these compo-

H 2 fitions ;

* How different is the language of Scipio's tomb at *Torre di Patria* ;

“Ingrata Patria, ne quidem ossa habebis.”

sitions; and if a man of rank at Paris had said *indirectly* half as much against one of your ministers in any company, he would sleep that night in the Bastile. The indecency of this will shock you; but I know no country where there are so many shameful violations of public * decency to be met with as in this.

In my next, I shall give you some account of our first-rate Geniuses, Wits, and Beauties, and a short history of the present state of arts, letters, and manners amongst us. *Vale, hostium dilectissime.*

* To attempt to keep a large city free from vice, would be ridiculous; because it is ridiculous to attempt impossibilities. But a tolerable decency of manners ought to be expected; because we see it is practicable, and to be met with to a certain degree every where else.

LETTER II.

WHAT is Love?

“ C'est un Dieu, mon maître,
 “ Et qui l'est, belle Iris, du berger & du roi,
 “ Il est fait comme vous, il * pense comme moi,
 “ Mais il est plus hardi peut-être :”

was the extempore answer given by that elegant poet, and worthy character, the Cardinal de Bernis, to a lady who asked him the question. I like your definition, said the Marchioness, it is gallant; but I like my own better, though it is only in prose; *C'est l'étoffe de la nature brodée par l'imagination.*

As Love is the most amiable and the most interesting of the passions, there is scarce a Wit or a Philosopher from Plato to Farquhar that has not written upon it. They seem to have thought it a sort of duty to write upon this subject, and have all treated it differently, according to their different characters, experience, and feelings. Cherry's account of it is very

* He meant *sent*, but it would not have made out the line.

very *je-ne-sais-quoiish*. "It is she knows
" not what ; it comes she knows not how ;
" and goes she knows not when." Petrarch and Plato confined it wholly to spirit ; and made the most exquisite of human joys consist in the pure but voluptuous union of two sympathizing souls. The modern Italians, composed of somewhat grosser elements, and incapable of relishing the sublime refinements of Plato and of Petrarch, run unfortunately into an opposite extreme ; and as the Poet and Philosopher had totally excluded *body* from their system of love ; so these corrupt and unhallowed Moderns banish from theirs every idea of *soul*. The French, I fear, rather incline to the system of their impure neighbours ; and though the exclusion of soul is not absolutely necessary in France, as it almost appears to be in Italy, yet, I repeat it, I am afraid that it does not enter so much as it ought to do in the commerce of the sexes ; and that the indulging the senses, in general, is preferred to the more delicate raptures and blisses of sentiment.

What is *my* definition of it ? Thank you, Ma'am ; that is the very question I was going to answer. *It is a deep and tender*

*tender * friendship accompanied by desire.* It is very rarely to be met with in the world ; oftener in England than any where else ; and much oftener among women than among men.

What the Italians call love is downright sensuality ; and its object is simple corporeal gratification. Enjoyment always puts an end to their passion ; and when the curiosity of the parties is tolerably satisfied, connections are daily dissolved by mutual consent. In that country, then, love is fervid, boiling, and impetuous ; and, were not its impulses checked by the fear of danger arising from the jealousy and revenge of rivals, the commerce between the sexes would be brought pretty nearly to the same footing that it is on among the brute creation. It is brought to that footing among the lower classes of the people at Naples, with whom nothing is more common than public and promiscuous co-habitation.

In France, the God of love assumes another form. He is not so warm or so gross as he is in Italy. He is sportive, fanciful,

* You will ask again, what I mean by friendship ? I mean, what Tully meant by it ; *The union of good people founded upon virtue.*

fanciful, and voluptuous. The women are too lively and coquettish to make, and the men too light and dissipated to receive, very deep impressions. Love, then, with the French is, in reality, but gallantry, and its principal object is amusement.

My definition then is drawn from England. I cannot spare a word out of it; they are all precious. Love can no more exist without *friendship* than it can without desire; nor can it exist without *desire* more than it can without friendship. Of friendship the sole foundation-is virtue: now the English women are universally allowed to be the most virtuous in Europe. One of the chief traits which distinguishes them is sensibility; and sensibility is the immediate parent of all that is tender, soft, and gentle. Hence then comes the word *tender* into my definition. I have now only to shew the propriety and importance of the word *deep*.

Neither deep thinking nor deep feeling can ever come but from solitude. Do you believe Sir Isaac Newton had his hair dressed in a morning, to dine in one house, to visit in six, to sup in a seventh, and then finish his evening at a masquerade? As, then the understanding has need of retirement,

ment, to pursue uninterruptedly a train of thinking ; so, be assured, the heart has need of solitude, to have impressions sink deep in it, to fix its attention to a particular point, and to keep it from being distracted by a multiplicity of objects.

Now the women of England, from natural character, from education, and from habit, pass more of their time at home and in the country, than the women of any other nation. When once a favourable impression is made upon them, their hearts are totally engrossed by it : it is the perpetual food of their souls. Their sentiments then are as *profound* as they are *soft* ; and hence appear the importance and propriety of the word *deep* in my definition.

Wherever the seat of love in women may be fixed ; whether in the heart, as in England ; in the head, as in France ; or in any other part, as among the Italian ladies ; certain it is that the *Marquise's* account of it is equally just. Whatever be the ground-work that a woman sees in a lover, her imagination aggrandizes and embroiders it most furiously : and hence the necessity, that my letter may finish with a moral, of turning girls minds early to appreciate real merit in men ; of making

them see that a state of love is the only happy state this side the grave ; that *that* love alone is sure and lasting which is fixed upon esteem ; that esteem comes only from virtue ; and that virtue in characters is rarely solid but when it is accompanied by good sense. The more virtues a man has, the better is Madam's chance for happiness. If he be brave, generous, sincere, humane, and sensible, he can scarce make a bad father to her children, or be wanting in the great duties he owes her as a wife, or in those daily lesser attentions, which constitute so considerable a part of the happiness of women.

Conclusion : that women ought to look chiefly for sense and virtue in husbands ; provided always, *as an indispensable clause*, that there be nothing in the formation of the said husband, disagreeable to the sight, the hearing, or the touch.

P. S. Many people fall in love from vanity. Miss wishes to possess Mister, because he is admired in the world for his wit, his person, or for his graceful dancing. She reasons upon her husband as she does upon her ear-rings and her equipage. She thinks she partakes the praise bestowed upon them. This is one reason :

reason: and then it is such a delightful thing to be envied! What I have said here is almost as true of young men, as it is of women. But the great general source of this passion is *Self-love*; and is very happily expressed in a line of a sweet old song;

“ And I love my Love, because I know my Love
“ loves me.”

L E T.

LETTER III.

THREE was no mediocrity in Shakespeare. All he has writ is enchanting or execrable. Pope says, in the beginning of his Preface to his edition of this poet's works: "It is not my design "to enter into a criticism upon this author; though to do it effectually, and "not superficially, would be the best "occasion that any just writer could take "to form the judgment and taste of our "nation."

Pope's idea is certainly a just one; but it is not practicable. Faults and beauties are so thickly sown in Shakespeare, and so intermixed, it would take twenty volumes to separate them. I think I conceive how it might be done, and I shall here attempt a specimen.

Nothing is to be said of the plans of his pieces. They are, properly speaking, no plans at all. I don't believe he ever formed one, except that of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. The rest are all taken from histories, novels, and romances, which

which he took as he found them, and rendered them fit for dramatic representation. His plans then, considered in the whole, are not his own; and consequently neither entitle him to censure or praise. He took, for example, Plutarch's Life of Brutus, and threw it into dialogue. If this fable be good, the merit is Plutarch's; if it is bad, the faults cannot be Shakspere's.

But if he never formed a plan for a play, he always did for a scene; and some of his scenes are indisputably the best planned, as well as the best executed, that ever were imagined. Plutarch says, Cassius worked upon Brutus to gain him over to the conspiracy. He says after, Brutus and Cassius quarrelled. On these two words Shakspere finds two scenes. Examine those scenes, that of Iago working on Othello, and the trial-scene in the Merchant of Venice; and then answer if any writer of any country ever produced scenes superior to them in point of plan and conduct. This and the Merry Wives of Windsor prove evidently his capacity to create good plans, but he saw they would be useless. The age was not sufficiently enlightened to taste regular pieces:

pieces: they were fond of seeing in action the novels and histories which they were fond of reading; and Shakspeare, who thought only of making his fortune, complied with the reigning fashion of the times.

This single circumstance of want of plan in this author is an insurmountable difficulty to his ever succeeding in France. The people of that country consider a rational and regular plan as the first indispensable article in a play; and it certainly must be allowed to be a very great one. This it is that constitutes the grand merit of Racine, who is their standard of perfection. You may easily imagine I do not mean that this is the merit of this poet which captivates the French in general. No; they are charmed by the sweetness of his versification, the elegance of his language, and by the tenderness of his situations and sentiments. It is with the poets and true critics that this has so much and so just weight.

The famous Chancellor D'Aguesseau has said, "The English do not know, "how to make a book." Wherever Voltaire found a striking thought, no matter whether true or false, he always considered

considered it as legal plunder, and never failed to appropriate it to himself. He has repeated this assertion in the words of the Chancellor; and all the French have repeated it after him. Many people will exclaim, What nonsense! Have not the English made hundreds of books? These writers mean, the English do not make the plan of a book in their heads before they begin to write it. I am not sure that all my readers will understand me. I must explain myself by an example. The cities of Turin, Nancy, and Philadelphia were all planned before one house was begun to be built. There was no plan formed for the building of London and Paris. This is what the French mean about books. They would have the Whole imagined, and the disposition of each part settled, before an author entered upon the execution of a work. This was Racine's manner of writing; and hence his answer to Lewis the Fourteenth: The King had given him a subject for a tragedy; and, some time after, asked him if it was finished? Racine, who had made the plot, and arranged the scenes in his head, answered, "Yes, Sire, I have only to write it."

Nothing

Nothing can be said of Shakspere's plans, except that he has none; or that if he has, they are not his own. And why did he not make plans? I know no answer, except that he did not chuse it.

All this is digression. I return. I shall take the seventh scene of the third act of Romeo and Juliet, because it is short, and because I am fond of it. But this must be the subject of another letter.

LETTER IV.

JULIET.

WILT thou be gone? it is not yet near day:
 It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
 That pierc'd the fearful hollow of thine ear;
 Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate tree;
 Believe me, Love, it was the nightingale.

ROM. It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
 No nightingale. Look, Love, what envious freaks
 Do lace the severing clouds in yonder East:
 Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
 Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops;
 I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

JUL. Yon light is not day light, I know it
 well;

It is some meteor that the sun exhales,
 To be this night a torch-bearer,
 And light thee on thy way to Mantua.
 Then stay a while, thou shalt not go so soon.

ROM. Let me be taken; let me be put to death,
 I am content, if thou wilt have it so.
 I'll say yon gray is not the morning-eye;
 'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow.
 I'll say, 'tis not the lark whose notes do bear
 The vaulty heavens so high above our heads;
 Come, death, and welcome. Juliet wills it so.
 What says my Love? let's talk, it is not day.

JUL. It is, it is, hie hence away, be gone;
 It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
 Straining harsh discords, and unpleasing sharps:
 O now be gone, more light and light it grows.

ROM.

Rom. More light and light?—more dark and
dark our woes.
Farewel, my Love: one kiss, and I'll be gone.

The conception of this whole scene is entirely new, and very happy indeed. The last time we have seen Juliet is when she says to her Nurse,

Give this ring to my true lord,
And bid him come to *take his last farewell*.

We now see her with her lover at a window which looks into a garden. To this window is fixed a ladder of ropes. Her first words are; *Wilt thou be gone?*— Answer, new-married wives who love your husbands, is that the language of nature and of truth? Is it not with such sweet and artless eloquence as Juliet uses, you would endeavour to detain them?

Wilt thou be gone? it is not yet near day:
It was the *nightingale*, and not the lark,
That pierc'd the fearful hollow of thine ear;
Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate tree:
Believe me, Love, it *was* the nightingale.

Of these five lines four are inimitably beautiful. They strike at first sight, and improve at every reading. The last line is peculiarly happy. After having endeavoured to impose upon herself by,

Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate tree,
the

She endeavours to impose upon Romeo,
and finishes as she had begun,

Believe me, Love, it *was* the nightingale.

With what art has the poet kept the word *Love* for the last line, and thrown it in just before the point she wishes to persuade ! It is not certainly the weakest part of Juliet's argument.

That pierc'd the fearful hollow of thine ear
appears to me to be bad. Romeo, sunk in the luxury of love, hears a bird sing ; he starts from Juliet's arms, and cries, "I hear the lark, and must be gone." Shakspeare suppresses this, but lets us know it by making Juliet say, " It was the " nightingale which you heard, and which " alarmed you." He wanted to express these two thoughts in a line. *That pierc'd the hollow of thine ear* says, which you heard ; and *fearful* says, which alarmed you. Any one who tries, will not find it easy to express these two thoughts in ten syllables better than Shakspeare has done. However, he has done it ill. *Pierc'd* is well ; *fearful* is well ; and *pierc'd thy fearful ear* would not have been amiss ; but *pierc'd the hollow of thine ear* is a periphrasis that borders upon bombast. The line considered

sidered abstractedly is a fine-sounding line, but it is not of a colour with the rest. It is scarlet placed beside pea-green. The thoughts are just, but the harmony of colouring is destroyed.

ROM. It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
No nightingale—

Good break.

Look, Love, what envious streaks
envious is well ;

Do lace the severing clouds in yonder East.

Lace, perhaps, too poetical for the situation ; *Do* an expletive.—Good line, however.

Night's candles are burnt out—

Very bad, consider it as you will.

and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.

Fine poetry ; but Romeo should not have said *jocund*.

I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

JUL. Yon light is not day-light, I know it well ;

It is some meteor that the sun exhales,
To be this night a torch-bearer,

And light thee on thy way to Mantua.

Then stay awhile, thou shalt not go so soon.

The

The first and last lines well; the other three, in my mind, far-fetched and ill; but may be defended.

Romeo is now to answer; and what would an ordinary poet have made him say? He would have made him repeat that it *was* day-break, and that the light increased; but Shakspeare was no ordinary poet, and Romeo answers;

Let me be taken; let me be put to death;
I am content, if thou wilt have it so.
I'll say yon gray is not the morning eye,
'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthias's brow.
I'll say 'tis not the lark, whose notes do bear
The vaulty heavens so high above our heads;
Come, death, and welcome. Juliet wills it so.
What says my Love? let's talk, it is not day.

The two last lines enchanting; all the rest well, except

'Tis not the lark, whose notes do bear
The vaulty heavens so high above our heads:

That is bad writing: it is not intelligible. It is not the lark whose notes are so high in the air, I suppose, he meant. Clearness is the first excellence of every species of writing. That passage is very dark; and if Shakspeare wrote as it is printed, he wrote ill.

Before I mention Juliet's reply, recollect what she said last;

Yon light is not day light; I know it well. . . .
. . . Then stay awhile, thou shalt not go so soon.

What does she say now?

It is, it is, hie hence, away, be gone.

Happy, happy, happy line. I do not think there ever was a better one written. Juliet says but two words; "It is, be "gone;" but she repeats one twice, and the other three times.

ROM. Come, death, and welcome. Juliet
wills it so.

What says my Love? Let's talk, it is not day.

JUL. It is, it is; hie hence, away, be gone.

I should have known the touches of Shakspeare in these three lines, had I met them in India. This was the kind of writing that made Pope say; "The poetry "of Shakspeare was inspiration indeed; "and that it was not so just to say he was "an imitator of Nature, as to say he was "her organ."

It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.

For Juliet to say, that the notes of the lark were at that time harsh and unpleasing music, was neither an unnatural nor a far-

far-fetched thought ; but to make her use the technical terms of *discords* and *sharps* was bad taste.

O now be gone, more light and light it grows.

R o M. More light and light, more dark and dark our woes.

O Shakspeare, Shakspeare, why did you not blot that line ? It is too detestable to need a comment ; and the scene ended so well without it ;

Farewell, my Love ; one kiss, and I'll be gone.

LETTER V.

Isaid that the passage of the meteor might be defended.

In another scene Shakspeare makes Juliet say :

Come Night, come Romeo ! come thou day in night !

For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night,
Whiter than snow upon the raven's back :
Give me my Romeo, Night, and when he dies,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine,
That all the world will be in love with night,
And pay no worship to the garish sun.

If Lee had written this, we should, no doubt, have imputed it to madness. But Shakspeare was not a madman. We all know his superior excellence was drawing and supporting characters. Who is Juliet? A girl in love. What girl? An Italian girl. Of what age? Under eighteen: and Shakspeare has marked this last circumstance twice. Whoever has conversed with Italian women, must know that they have very extraordinary imaginations, and that when their fancies are heated by any passion

passion *, they utter things much nearer madness than this is. Marini, one of the first poets of Italy, has passages infinitely more extravagant than this ; and those passages are not characteristic ones, as this of Juliet's is, but where the poet speaks himself. Almost all the very best poets of Italy have inordinate fancies as well as Marini, though they have not so many of them. If then those writers, who had ripe years and cool judgments to correct their compositions after they were written, are frequently full of wildness and nonsense,

how

* What passion heats the fancy so much as love ?—Hear Shakspere :

The lunatick, the lover and the poet,
Are of imagination all compact :
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold :
This is the madman : the lover all as frantick
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt :
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to
heaven ;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name. M. N. D.

Shakspeare had three particular individuals in his mind when he wrote these lines ; Orestes, Marc Antony, and Himself.

how evident is it that a *young* romantic girl of that country, violently in love for the first time, should utter almost the language of frenzy ! And how faithful to Nature and to Truth is the painter who has given us her portrait !

How Shakspeare came to be well acquainted with the Italian women, whether by knowing some of them in London, or by seizing their characters in the Italian Novels, with the same penetration with which he seized those of Brutus and Coriolanus from reading Plutarch, I cannot tell. But no man shall persuade me that Juliet and Rosalind, under the influence of the same passion, shall utter such different sentiments in such different language, and that all that difference is purely accidental.

It is some meteor which the sun exhales
 'To be this night a torch-bearer,
 And light thee on thy way to Mantua ;

may be defended on this ground. I have not dared to praise either of these passages, I have only said, I think they may be defended.

LETTER VI.

RUBENS ought to have been born in Italy; and Galileo in a country of freedom. But if Nature mistook in giving one to Antwerp, and the other to Florence, she did not mistake in giving Shakspere to England, and Voltaire to France. The graceful elegance, the sprightly brilliancy of the one were happily suited to the taste of a lively and polished people, as the nervous sense and sublime sentiments of the other seem peculiarly calculated to please a nation, which has ever been distinguished for solid thinking and elevated feelings.

The great secret in the commerce of life is to serve to every man the dish that pleases his palate. These two authors possessed this secret. They both wrote for the theatre, where the success or fall of a composition is most rapid; where the dangers run are greatest; and where the laurels won are most glorious. A dramatic writer is obliged to face a whole nation collected together. He must please the

great, the middling, and the low. To please a palate, one must study that palate; and Voltaire and Shakspeare studied most minutely the tastes of their respective countrymen; which is one principal cause of their having succeeded so eminently with them.

Lord Shaftesbury says pleasantly enough, that authors are professed *masters of understanding* to their age. *I*, however, do not presume to think myself capable of teaching my reader any thing. I do not even aim at giving him thoughts. I aim only to make him think. I throw out an idea: if the game started be worth following, he will have more pleasure and profit in running it down himself, than if I did it for him. If it is not worthy his attention, I do him a favour in not pressing him into the pursuit. I shall therefore bring those two poets together *for an instant*. This possibly may not be thought uninteresting as a literary subject, and as it throws some lights upon certain parts of the two greatest nations now existing.

Voltaire succeeded Racine; Boileau, Moliere: the first, the most perfect writer that perhaps ever lived; the second, a most enlightened and severe critic; Moliere, a man

man of uncommon depth and penetration, who joined an extensive knowledge of human nature to a most minute acquaintance with the rules of his art ; and who, though he entertains his reader better than any other comic writer, gives him still more information than amusement. These three authors fixed the taste of the French nation. This was the first great advantage Voltaire had over Shakspere. The taste of his nation was *one* ; consequently he had but one palate to please. That palate, it is true, was exquisitely refined.

The next advantage he had was that of having the poetic language of his country ascertained. Men of genius, from the impulse of nature, had created materials* : men of taste, under the patronage of Cardinal Richelieu, had purified those materials ; Racine and Boileau had put them in use. What had Voltaire to do ? The quarry was found ; the stones were cut, nay, and polished too ; he had nothing to do but to lay them. It was all he *did* do ; it was indeed *almost* all that was possible for him to do. He could not create a new word, because that was forbidden. All that

* Language I mean.

that he could create was new combinations of words : to do *that*, required a little, but very little genius ; however, that little he wanted. Every poet in France will tell you he has added nothing to the language ; and all he could have added to it was combinations*.

What now was Shakspeare's comparative situation ? He came into a chaos of tastes, and into a chaos of language. There is no national taste in England at the hour I write. What must it have been in Queen Elizabeth's time ? When I say the English nation has no taste, I do not say there are not individuals in England who have great taste. I always supported the contrary ; and never more strongly than when I was in France. I said the French nation had more taste than the English nation ; but that there was a number of individuals in England, men and women, who had greater and finer taste

* I mean bringing together two words, which never had been brought together before ; as,

The *bwddy wind* which kisses all it meets.

Those two words were in the language, but Shakspeare was the first who combined them. I quote this as a new combination, not a good one. You say it is bold. It is more than bold ; it is audacious.

taste than was to be met in any other part of Europe. Pick a number of persons in England, and pick the same number in France. The picked Englishmen shall be superior to the picked Frenchmen. But fill two theatres: the theatre in France shall be infinitely superior to the theatre in England. I shall explain the reason of this presently in another letter.

Shakspeare then was forced to please this chaos; and to please it, he was forced to write a chaos. But what versatility of talents must that man have had, to be able to command the admiration of the greatest Geniuses and most shining Wits of his country, and to captivate the lowest of the people, and all the intermediate classes between those extremes!

Recollect now the situation in which he found the English language, the difficulties he had to struggle with there, and the degree of perfection to which he brought it. When you compare him in those points with Voltaire, then judge them both by the most infallible of all criterions for dramatic writings, by their effects. Voltaire is universally admired by his nation, but I never met an enthusiast that he made*.

I have

* As a poet.

I have scarce known an Englishman of parts, who had a taste for poetry, that was not an enthusiast for Shakspeare.

Far from wishing to depreciate Voltaire as a dramatic writer, I confess that I admire him much. I do not love Cæsar less; but I love Rome more. I admire the garden of the Tuilleries; the Bay of Naples transports me. Shakspeare's writings resemble this bay; Voltaire's pieces resemble that garden. The one is uniform, noble, beautiful, fine. The eye takes in its whole with ease; its parts are distributed with judgment; its ornaments are happily disposed. Examined with minuteness, it is found free from faults; but it wants variety; its extent is limited; and its beauties are to be numbered *. The other has defects. If you look into it minutely, you shall here discover a field of brambles, and there a frightful precipice. Here you shall behold a barren rock, and there you will see a miserable cottage. But it defies you to examine it minutely, without allowing yourself to be destitute of soul and sense. Sublimity is its characteristic; and grandeur is every where blended with beauty. Its variety is endless; its treasures are inexhaustible.

* *Numerabilis utpote parva.*

haustible. The sweetest hills, the loveliest vallies, the richest vineyards, and the brightest * coasts are intermingled with smiling villages, with noble seats, and a most splendid and ample city. Here, groves of orange-trees and myrtle; there, woods of beeches and of oaks. The luxuriancy of these beauties is enchanting; the grandeur of the scene exceeds belief. A boundless sea, a range of mountains, and an awful volcano fill not only the eye, but the soul and the imagination. Nature presents no greater objects. Judge of their sublimity by their effects. Vesuvius bellows, the earth shakes, the sea swells, Pompeii is suffocated, and Stabia is overwhelmed. Another night this tremendous mountain roars, a flood of fire issues from its womb, an universal cry of horror is heard from Herculaneum, a sudden silence follows—the city is no more. No pen can paint these scenes: and I must close, by saying, that both they and the garden excite admiration; but the garden of the Tuilleries was made by *Le Nautre*; the Bay of Naples was formed by the Deity.

* Nullus in orbe locus Baiis *prælucet* amœnis.

LETTER VII.

MANY people have a kind of happy instinct in matters of taste, and determine often rightly upon difficult subjects, without having any principles to direct their judgments. It is evident, that if those persons' natural faculties were cultivated, they would have better taste than others. But Taste being a combination of judgment and feelings, there never can be any *certainty* in the determination of a man whose judgment is not formed. To form the judgment, there is but one method. It is by making comparisons. To compare two objects perfectly, one must understand them both. And hence it follows, that the first step towards acquiring a good taste is knowledge. Without knowledge no comparisons can be formed: without comparisons the judgment cannot be chastened; without judgment there can be no *sure* taste.

I shall explain myself by an example, which I shall take from sculpture; because, as it appears to me to be the simplest of all

all the arts, I shall have less trouble to make myself understood. A young man wants to acquire a taste for sculpture. If Nature has not given him feeling, he seeks an impossibility. If she *has* given him feeling, he must then acquire knowledge to form his judgment, and this knowledge is to be acquired but by seeing statues. A statue is the imitation of a man or a woman. The first one he sees, he will be able to say whether it resembles a woman or a man ; but he will not be able to say, whether or no it is a good statue. *Good* is relative : it is only by comparing that statue with a number of others he can be able to ascertain its value.

Apollo is always represented as a beautiful youth. A hundred sculptors, ancient and modern, have executed this subject. Shew a very indifferent one to a young man ; and another very capital one to another young man ; let them be the first statues that either of them have seen ; and their judgments upon the two will be probably the same. They will both say, that these two statues are fine. He who has seen the indifferent Apollo, will be as much charmed as he who has seen the other ; and his taste will be equally good.

This

This statue is the best he has ever seen ; and he is not to be blamed for admiring it. It is evident now that this man's taste is not sure ; and it is evident that he is born with the means of making it so. Let him then see the Apollo of Girardon, that of Bernini, several others ancient and modern, and let him finish with the Apollo Belvedere. He will then have seen all that is most perfect in the art. If he examines each of these statues separately with attention, and afterwards compares them together, he will acquire the power of ascertaining the value of each, and of assigning to it its true rank. The knowledge that he has obtained will form his judgment ; his judgment will then direct his feelings ; and that man will acquire a sure and perfect taste.

This reasoning appears to me to be just, when applied to poetry, painting, eloquence, and all the other arts.

The English education, bad as it is, is the best in Europe. It is essentially bad in one point ; and essentially stupid in another : bad, in not paying the smallest attention to the cultivation of the English language, one of the finest, in every point of view, that ever existed ; stupid, in making

making a youth pass fourteen important years of his life, in learning as much Greek, Latin, and Science, as might very easily be acquired in six. However, there is none so good any where else. Every man of birth in England goes through a course of Latin, Greek, French, Italian, Science, and makes the tour of Europe. Those advantages are astonishingly great, and such as scarce any Frenchman has. The profit that a lad derives from this depends upon himself, and upon the persons to whom he is entrusted. He may read Cicero and Demosthenes, Tasso and Milton, Racine and Moliere, and see the Transfiguration and the Apollo, without an atom of improvement. If he has parts and feeling, the understanding several languages, and seeing different countries, are prodigious advantages. By multiplying thus the stock of his ideas, he is enabled to make a multitude of comparisons; those comparisons refine his judgment; and thus, if, as I said, he has naturally parts and feeling, he becomes a man of perfect taste.

A Frenchman has not those advantages. He possesses only two languages, and he does not travel; and this is the true and real

real * cause, why the few in England have a greater number of tastes, and more perfect tastes, than the few in France.

LET-

* If, from their mode of education and from travel, the English derived but two advantages, that of seeing the best works of the Greek artists, and that of reading the best works of the Greek writers, those advantages alone would be sufficient to give them a superiority in point of taste over the French.

LETTER VIII.

WELL, then, in point of taste, the few in England are superior to the few in France. Let us pick our men; let them pick theirs; and we shall beat them. But fill a theatre in London, and another at Paris; the theatre at Paris shall beat us all to nothing. Why?

There are many reasons. The first is, the people of that country have quicker parts and clearer conceptions than the common English. The difference in the climates, in the food, in the liquors, in the manners, &c. are all causes of this. With quicker parts they have also livelier feelings. And they have in consequence of this a great deal of that happy instinct I spoke of. A French hair-dresser shall go to dress a lady. She shall have at her toilette a beautiful picture. The instant he sees it he shall exclaim, *magnifique!* Ask him why? His answer shall be nonsense.

From Nature then they have a superiority in parts and feeling. From culture, properly so called, neither one nor the other

other has any advantages. A citizen at Paris has received no better education than a citizen at London ; and neither of them has any knowledge, *from study*, out of his vocation. But a citizen of Paris has, if I may so say, an accidental education, infinitely superior to that of a citizen of London. When he goes to the playhouse, he sees perfect pieces represented ; he hears in many comedies (particularly in Moliere's) the soundest sense and most judicious criticism. That nation is as fond of dramatic entertainments as ever the Athenians were. In consequence of this, the people in general have a certain degree of knowledge in this point ; and this citizen, when he goes to the theatre, finds himself surrounded by people who have ideas to give, and who are very communicative.

When this man goes to walk, the garden of the Tuilleries is always open to him. He sees order, regularity, plan, in the garden itself. It is filled with marble statues and groupes, some of which are above mediocrity. His attention is engaged, he examines, he compares ; he talks of those objects, and is talked to of them. Paris is full of fine collections of pictures, which he may see whenever he pleases.

pleases. There are some very fine pieces of architecture, which he is forced to see as he walks the streets. When he goes to the opera, he has exhibitions of grace to form his eye, such as are not to be found in any other part of the world.

If he makes a three hours excursion to Versailles, he there again finds pictures by the best masters of all the schools. He finds a profusion of marble, some good * copies from the best Greek statues in Italy, and some very good originals. What an assemblage of favourable circumstances here for the French citizen, of which the English citizen does not possess one! If I looked for other reasons, I am sure I could find them. But, *frustra fit per plura quod fieri potest per pauciora.* I have said enough to convince all the world, that the collective body of that people must have more taste than the collective body of this.

L E T-

* Having these copies made, was one of the wisest things Lewis the Fourteenth did for the improvement of taste. It was not so wise placing them in an open garden. He ought to have built a gallery for a few of the best of them. They would then have been useful to the artist and amateur; as they are, they are of little use to either.

LETTER IX.

HERE are three things, said a Frenchman, I always loved, and never could understand ; Music, Painting, and Women. I resemble this Frenchman in my love and ignorance of one of those three things ; I mean Music. I suppose few people doubt which of the fine arts deserves the highest rank. Mankind is almost unanimous in favour of Poetry. The places of her sisters are not yet determined. Some prefer Painting to Sculpture ; others, Sculpture to Painting. Many think Architecture superior to both ; and while some persons * consider Music as scarce worthy to be named among the liberal arts ; others find in her charms superlatively bewitching ; and think she may dispute precedence even with Poetry herself.

Far be it from me to enter into this dispute. Numberless arguments, I dare say, are to be adduced in favour of Music, both

* Lord Chesterfield for one.

both as an art and as a science. Many arguments, I suppose, may be offered against her. My suffrage in her favour can be of little weight, I do not comprehend her. But as nobody can be angry with the Frenchman for loving Women, though he did not understand them; so I hope you will not be offended at my declaring myself an admirer of the Goddess of Harmony, and of offering some light arguments in her favour. What I have to say shall at least be intelligible. It shall not be drawn from the depth of science, but from the effects which Music has produced upon myself, and from those which I have observed her to produce on others.

I am, first of all, fully satisfied that of all the arts Music gives the most universal pleasure; that she pleases the longest, and pleases the oftenest. Infants are charmed with the melody of sounds; old age is animated by enlivening notes. Arcadian Shepherds drew pleasure from their reeds; Achilles's solitude was cheared by his lyre; the English peasant rejoices in his pipe and tabor; and the flute is the delight and solace of Frederic.

Its effect is not less sensible upon brutes than upon men :

For do but note a wild and wanton herd,
Or race, of youthful and unhandled colts,
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing
loud,

(Which is the hot condition of their blood)
If they perchance but hear a trumpet sound,
Or any air of music touch their ears,
You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze,
By the sweet power of Music.

I always consider the Muse of Harmony as a beautiful foreigner who speaks a language I do not understand ; but whose voice is so sweet and so expressive, that when her soul is mov'd, or her imagination warmed, she makes me sympathize with all her feelings ; and as she is differently affected by pleasure or by pain, I glow with transport, or I melt in tears.

'Till I visited Italy, Dryden's Ode appeared to me an extravagant fiction. Charming by its numbers, brilliant in its language, animating and imposing by the variety, beauty, and grandeur of its images, it seemed, if I may so say, a lovely picture painted upon cobweb ; the colours bright, the groupes most happily contrasted, the forms sublime and elegant ; but

but the ground flimsy and unsubstantial. I admired the poet's boldness ; I thought his Muse had made a daring flight ; but I regretted that she had left reason and truth behind her.

I do no longer think so. Let any man who understands Italian, who has a good ear and a feeling soul, go to a concert at Rome. Let him hear a *first-rate* performer sing three *first-rate* compositions on Joy, Pity, and Revenge : I will venture to affirm, that the transitions produced in his soul shall be as sure and sudden as those mentioned by the poet to have passed in the breast of Alexander. Let him then recollect the character of the Prince ; it was the boiling, impetuous son of Philip : the situation ; a feast where he was already heated with wine : the previous disposition of his soul ; it was elate with joy for Persia won : the concomitant circumstances ; the lovely Thais at his side, in flower of youth and beauty's pride, whose eyes darted contagious fire in his soul ; his valiant chiefs, the partners of his toils and witnesses of his triumphs, disposed around him. When he has reflected an instant on these ideas, let him consider the choice of Timotheus's subjects ; how calculated

culated to operate on such a *character*, in such a *situation*; and then bringing together the effects he feels produced on himself, and those that are painted in this celestial Ode, he will no longer think the Poet has excursioned into the absolutely airy Regions of Fancy, but that he has confined himself within the literal bounds of probability and reason.

I shall not mention the surprizing power of sounds in curing the bite of the Tarantula; but I cannot pass in silence Plato's Idea of the effect of Music upon the character of a nation. He thought that no change could be made in the harmony of a country, without bringing on necessarily a change in the manners. Such an idea as this must appear singularly extravagant when applied to the organs of our Northern nations. But when the organisation of the people to whom he spoke is considered; when their uncommon sensibility, both of *soul* and *imagination*, are duly attended to; and when one remembers that Plato was no vulgar thinker, rashness may be checked in its hasty decision, and doubt may succeed to positive determination.

For my own part, I confess I do *not* doubt of this philosopher's being in the right; and I believe that those who examine attentively the present character of the Italians, will find, that Plato's observation is not altogether so aerial as they thought. The sole object of their lives is Music. They know, indeed, but two occupations, Music and making Love. Now Love, in that country, being reduced to a very simple affair, having no wit in it as in France, nor sentiment in it as in England, the great resource of the inhabitants is Music. It is indeed the weapon, if I may so say, which is used both by men and women to acquire and keep their conquests. A Neapolitan or Roman Lover cannot more highly oblige his mistress than by procuring her a new air made at Bologna, at Florence, or at Venice. But as every thing is estimated according to the difficulties conquered, airs that come a greater distance are valued in proportion; and those made at London *, Berlin, and Petersburg, are more highly esteemed. The sums of money spent in this way passes belief.

And

* By Italian masters I mean.

And as to the Lady, whenever she has a mind *to split a heart with tenderness* *, her invariable and only resources are her harpsichord and her voice.

Is it not certain that the general character of the Music of Italy is tender and voluptuous? Is it not certain that the people of that country are the loosest and most enervated of Europe? And has not Shakspeare, who, if I mistake not, was as great a philosopher as ever lived; has not he said, immediately after the lines I have already quoted?

Therefore the poet
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and
floods;
Since nought so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
But Music for the time doth change his nature.

If then a man naturally rough becomes softened for the time by Music; if those times are continually renewed, habit will take place of nature, and that man's character will, to a certain degree, change. If this be true in the extremes, as I believe it is, and that Music has the power of softening

* Se tutti i mali miei
Io ti potessi dir,
Dividerti farei
Per tenerezza il cor.

softening a harsh nature; how infinitely stronger must the probability be of its changing a mild character into a voluptuous one!

Thus much for the Italians. Let us now see if there be another people in Europe who have a national Music; let us see if that Music has a peculiar character, and if the manners of that nation correspond with the general character of its Music. If upon enquiry we find that such a people does exist, that their national harmony is the direct opposite of Italian harmony, and that their manners are precisely the reverse of Italian manners, I think we may reasonably draw a conclusion in favour of the opinions of Plato and of Shakspere. I name the Germans.

The music of those men is vigorous and energetic; and so are their souls. I need not dwell on the opposition between these people and the Italians; it is well known. To assert that their difference of character proceeds from this cause *alone*, would be absurd. To affirm that this cause is a very principal one of that difference would, I believe, be just. Let us judge of the effect produced on them by the effects produced on us; and let us

attend to some German and Italian compositions, and observe the different dispositions of our souls at the end of those different performances.

To avoid, as much as can be, a possibility of error, let us not go to their private concerts or to their public assemblies. In those places particular circumstances might make an opposition in the performances, that would put it out of our power to form a comparison. One might be an exhibition of voluptuous paintings * ; the other might be pictures of pastoral simplicity. Let us then, I say, neither conclude from their chamber-music, nor from their theatres, let us accompany them both to the Parade, and draw our ideas from their military music. This comparison is a fair one, because the subject is the same, and its object is the same. Judge then their feelings by your own. The softness of the one music will ravish your senses; the spirit of the other will animate your soul. A march at Naples is a delicious symphony, which,

Softly sweet in Lydian measure,
Gently soothes the soul to pleasure :

But

* Don't criticise the word *paintings* : Music paints every thing; when she does not paint, she is good for nothing.

But in the music of Frederic,
The spirit-stirring drum, th' ear-piercing fife,
rouze up the man, the nerves are braced,
the soldiers hearts beat high, and, like
the Athenians after an Oration of De-
mosithenes, they are ready to cry, " To
" arms, to arms, and lead us against
" Austria."

LETTER X.

THE Graces, the Graces, the Graces, are Lord Chesterfield's perpetual cry through four pretty considerable volumes. He thought that they were useful to a man in advancing him in the world ; and I believe he thought very right.

This noble author talks so much and so often of those *amiable somethings*, that his reader at last falls in love with them ; he wishes to possess them ; and then thinks of asking himself what they are. There his Lordship fails his reader ; he has not explained them, nor has he shewn how they are to be acquired. He calls them *je-ne-sais-quois* which charm ; *indescribable somethings* which enchant. These phrases may be pretty, but they convey no idea. I cannot see what a man can find who looks for *he don't know what*.

All Grace consists in * motion. The great secret of it is, to marry two apparent contradictions ;

* Grace was in all her steps.

contradictions ; to unite, in the same movement, quickness and softness, vivacity and mildness, gentleness and * spirit.

If softness becomes flowness, it is languid and dull. If liveliness is not tempered with gentleness, it becomes violence or levity. Every † violent movement is ungracious ; and levity touches near upon ridicule. The union of those two requisites is necessary in dancing, walking, bowing, talking, carving, presenting or receiving any thing, and, if I may venture to add, in smiling.

Ease is the essence of grace: but all motions, quick and smooth, will necessarily be easy and free. When Milton describes the grace of an angel, it is
“smooth-

* Shakspeare, who saw every thing, saw this too. When Hamlet gives rules to the players for graceful action, he says ; “ And in the *very* *torrent*, *tempest*, and, as I may say, *whirlwind* of your passion, you must beget a *temperance* that may give it *smoothness*. . . . Use all gently. . . . Be not *too tame* either.

† The King of Prussia wants grace in his motions and in his tones. He is abrupt in both. The present Pepe (Braschi) is in this respect a happy contrast to his Prussian Majesty. The Queen of England's countenance is as graceful as it is gracious.

“smooth sliding without step;” and Guido’s angels, who are as graceful as Lady Erne, seem to have been painted after Milton’s description.

The seat of grace is in all parts of the body that have motion, as the legs, hands, arms, head, lips, eyebrows, but particularly in the neck. As the head is almost continually in motion, to have it move with freedom and ease, the muscles of the neck ought to be extremely supple. This suppleness is acquired by practice. The women of France possess it in a higher degree than those of any other country I know. A French woman sitting between two men will address the same phrase to both of them, by a free and easy motion of her head, without ever moving her shoulders. Women of other countries can not do that. When they turn the head, there is a stiffness in the joints or muscles of their necks, that makes them turn the whole body with it.

Nothing ever was graceful that was forced or unnatural. The smallest degree of affectation destroys grace. And hence the necessity of attending to that precious rule, *Rien de trop*; “Do not o’erstep “the modesty of nature.” The people who

who most frequently trespass against this precept are the people of the stage. They are almost all affected. Even the inimitable Vestris himself, the first dancer in the world, had his ungraceful *moments*. There is a point where grace is ; beyond that point is affectation. To hit the happy mean is difficult in every thing ; perhaps in nothing more so in the arts than in this grace we are talking of. Its effect is so fine, and it is so sure of captivating every beholder, that all painters aim at it particularly. Few of them succeed. Sir Joshua Reynolds, in my opinion, better than any man now living. Indeed, *in this particular*, he seems to me not inferior to any painter of Italy.

The most essential of all the Graces, because the most useful, and of the greatest effect, is to speak well. As every motion of the body ought to be free from confusion, hurry, or embarrassment, and at the same time animated and lively ; so the movement of the tongue ought to be quick without precipitation, and soft without monotony. The persons who unite vivacity to softness in their utterance, must necessarily speak with ease, which, as I have already said, is the essence

of grace. Were I to name a model, it should be the same Lady whom I have already mentioned in this * Letter.

When I said that affectation was the greatest enemy of the Graces; I said that simplicity was their best friend. But there is a mean simplicity, and there is a noble simplicity. If you wish to see the two strongest examples I know of each, look at an English Nobleman and a Dutch Jew. Those two characters are equally free from affectation; but the difference between their air and carriage is greater than any words I am master of can express.

Lord Chesterfield says; "He can neither ascertain nor define the graces." I cannot define them; but I think I have ascertained them; and I cannot see that they are so very difficult to be acquired. Nature, it is true, must do something; for there are people to whom it would be † impossible to give grace; and I believe Mr. Stanhope was one of them.

However,

* Page 58.

† It is the same in classes of animals. No education could give grace to a wild boar or an elephant. There is not a more graceful creature than a high-bred horse that is well trained.

However, where there is not some unhappiness in a character, a good master, a little attention, and frequenting the best company, will give a young man every idea that I have mentioned in this Letter; and, I confess, I do not see that he can add another which would not be ridiculous or trifling.

LETTER XI.

THE Graces are so pretty a subject, that it is not easy to quit them. My Lord Chesterfield praised them continually, for two reasons; one, to be useful to his son; the other, to pay his court to himself; for I have been always told he was a very graceful man. I have not the same interest in recommending the worship of these divinities that his Lordship had; for they certainly did not preside at *my* birth. I have not even grace in writing; but I hope I one day shall. However, it is not fair to conclude against me that I cannot understand my subject, because I am not myself a model. That would be as unjust as to say, I am not able to judge of beauty, because I am very very far from being * handsome.

Indulge me with your permission to write a letter or two on these Goddesses.

I may

* Observe, Reader, with what address my self-love softened that phrase. *Ugly* was the *proper word*; but it hurt both my ear and my feelings.

I may treat the subject ill; but it is so seducing a one, that I cannot resist it.

The Graces then, *Gratiæ* in Latin, and *Xægæs*; in Greek, Madam, as you know better than I, were originally of Grecian extraction. The Greeks had, of all people, the most beautiful imaginations. They produced the happiest and most perfect creations that ever have been known; and they embellished them when produced to the highest degree that pure and elegant taste could admit. The first point in taste, invention, grace, and every thing else, is good sense; and on this ground-work are all the inventions of the Greeks founded. The original idea of their creations was always taken from * Nature, and founded on Truth. Whenever they discovered a fertile and promising subject, they divided it into parts, and after they had cast away every thing belonging to it that was disagreeable or uninteresting, they beautified what remained to the highest degree of perfection.

A beautiful and amorous princess, whose name was Venus, was born in one of the Greek

* One may see a great many examples of this, at present, in the kingdom of Naples.

Greek islands. She had three amiable maids of honour who were sisters, and these were the Graces. This is all the foundation given by nature and truth; the Greek imagination created the rest. The poets first made this princess a divinity, and, to sublime their idea, fabled her sprung from the ocean. I need not tell you all they have said of her; you know it already. The painters of Greece then painted her from imagination. But, alas! canvas is perishable; and these pictures are no longer to be seen. One portrait of her, however, fortunately, still remains. I mean one *good* likeness; for there are innumerable Venuses: but the Venus of Medici is the only one which fills the imagination at once with an idea of Greek genius, and of perfect beauty.

The author of this statue said to himself, "I have a Goddess to create; and that Goddess is the Goddess of Love. She must be a perfect Beauty. But no such being has ever existed. I have no resource left but to create her myself." He then studied, in the most beautiful women of his country, the parts in which each particular woman excelled. He saw what constituted a perfect foot; a hand and

and arm ; a neck and bosom ; and after he had made himself master of each part, he, by a singular effort of genius, combined them with the justest symmetry into a perfect Whole. As happy an idea as ever entered into an artist's head ; and, I think, as difficult to execute.

Beauty was evidently the first idea for the Goddess of Love. But beauty alone, this refined Greek well knew, was insipid without grace, and uninteresting without character. His next thought consequently was, that by shewing his divinity in an happy moment, he would make grace, expression, character, all spring from *that* moment, in so *easy* a manner, that it should appear to have cost no effort ; and in so *natural* a manner, that it should seem impossible to have found another. He shews her then in the instant she rises from the sea ; and throwing himself, as it were, into her soul, he discovers in her countenance what must have been its first emotion. It is that of Modesty. There is the character at once determined, expression given to the statue, all the parts disposed of with decency and propriety ; and, to render his production perfect, the whole conveying a refined and elegant moral,

moral, that Love can only be inspired by the union of Beauty with Modesty.

This is a great excellency in the Greek artists of every kind; they have always a moral. They have too a happiness in chusing a moment to shew an object, of which other artists have scarce ever thought. *They snatched the nice points of time*, in which, whatever they had to exhibit, was to be seen to the greatest advantage. They carried this attention, as well as that of character, even to animals. The head of the boar, at Meleager's feet, is that of a fierce savage, that desolated an entire country, and struck with terror all its inhabitants. Had they a stork to shew? It is in the moment he is in conflict with a serpent, which twists itself in the most natural and graceful writhings about the neck of his feathered enemy. Was an eagle to be their subject? He is shewn in the instant that he is going to dart himself from a rock, and soar above the clouds. His air announces that he is the king of birds, and worthy to bear the thunderbolt of Jove. Whatever was the moment in real life, in which an animal would have most interested a spectator, is invariably

riably the * moment which the Greeks have chosen to shew it in.

I make you no apology, Madam, for this digression. You patronize the Grecians and the arts.

To return to the Venus of Medici. Her character is female excellence itself. She seems

A maiden never bold,
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
Blush'd at itself—

There then, Sir, say you, the Greek has mistaken the character: Venus was— Not yet, Madam; she is but just born. I grant you, afterwards she turned to folly; and took † foxhunters, ‡ officers, and § statesmen, with as little choice and delicacy as a Neapolitan Princeſs. But to have represented her at that period of her life, could not have answered the purpose of our Greek, who was to chuse a beautiful, an interesting, and a *moral* moment; and to give your portrait to the world ſome centuries before you were born.

L E T-

* All these examples are in the Vatican.

† Adonis. ‡ Mars. § Anchifex.

LETTER XII.

NOW that we have done with the Princes, if you please, we will speak of the Maids of honour. Their portraits are come down to us too; and though they are not so highly finished as that of their Queen, they are well enough done both to engage and instruct us.

The leading idea that characterises this amiable groupe, and which is implied in their * name, is gaiety and good-humour. They are always represented as young and handsome; and their faces wear a perpetual smile: The particular ideas conveyed to us by their names, serve only to illustrate their general appellation. The youngest is called † *Thalia*, which signifies a *blooming* girl; the second is named † *Euphrosyne*, which signifies a § *sprightly* one;

* Χαρίς, διττα απο της χαρας, à gaudio.

† Α Καρνω, vireo. † Ab Ευφρω, hilaris.

§ You remember Milton;

But come, thou goddes, fair and free,
In Heaven yclep'd Euphrosyne;

But

one ; and the eldest, who was to keep her sisters in order, is called * *Aglia*, which means brilliancy, splendour, and neatness, but at the same time implies dignity and decorum.

They are come down to us *naked* ; but *that*, Madam, you are not to be shocked at ; for they are to be considered entirely as an allegorical groupe. No material ideas about them at all. And the proof of this is, not one of the three had ever the least suspicion thrown out against her. This, considering the voluptuousness of their climate, and the example of their Sovereign, is a tolerable proof that they were rather spiritual than corporeal beings.

The meaning of their being naked is, that, like truth, they should be simple and unadorned : that they should be frank and † ingenuous, and shew themselves such

But by men, *heart-easing* mirth,
Whom lovely Venus at a birth
With two sister-graces more
To ivy-crowned Bacchus bore.

Milton, you see, makes them the offspring of *Love* and *Wine*. But they are more generally thought to be the daughters of Jupiter and Eurynome.

* *Aγλαία*, splendor, nitor, decus.

† Your *openness of heart*, says Sir Charles Grandison to Miss Byron, is one of the graces, for which I principally admire you.

such as they were, without coquetry, * dissimulation, or disguise. But their nakedness is as decent as nakedness *can* be; for view them as much as you please, from the chin to the ankle, or from the *chignon* to the heel, they never excite any idea that can offend the niceſt † delicacy. And hence it is that Horace ſo often calls them the *decent* Graces.

They are joined hand in hand, to ſhew that chearfulness, vivacity, and youth ought to be united with ſincerity, candour, and decorum; and to assure the beholder, that unless he poſſeffes *all* theſe qualities, he cannot boast of being a favourite with the Graces.

They are in motion, because without motion there can be no grace. Their movements, you will ſee, are animated and soft; and the decided character of the whole

* Lord Chesterfield did not mean to recommend them, in this point of view, to Mr. Stanhope.

† What I have ſaid here is equally true of Sir William Hamilton's Venus by Correggio: an enchanting picture indeed; now in the poſſeffion of a very good judge of painting, Mr. Greville, Brother to the Earl of Warwick.

whole groupe is a noble simplicity, and an unaffected modesty *.

The Greeks then, Madam, conceived that beauty was necessary to inspire love; but that the power of Venus was fleeting and transitory, unless she was attired and accompanied by the GRACES; that is, unless ease and affability, gentleness and spirit, good-humour, modesty, ingenuousness and candour *engaged* the admirers that beauty *attracted* †.

L E T-

* Hesiod, in his Theogony, and Seneca, in the third chapter of his first book *De Beneficiis*, give a very different account of the Graces.

† The three Graces are, if I may so say, united in the Venus of Medici.

LETTER XIII.

GRACE in writing lies in four words, *easy, cheerful, lively, smooth*. Voltaire, Fontenelle, Addison, and Lady Mary Wortley Montague are the best models of it I know. Lord Chesterfield is not a bad one. The most graceful speaker, in private company, I have ever met, is Lord Bristol.

P. S. I think that the Duke de Ceri *does* dance well; but I think Sir Thomas Gascoigne dances better.

LET-

LETTER XIV.

THE man who suffers an ignominious death, is condemned to that punishment because he does harm to society. He may plead in alleviation of his crime, and possibly with truth, the impulse of irresistible propensities. However, if mankind suffers by him, no attention is paid to his plea ; justice has its course ; and the rigour of the law is executed upon him.

If the injury done to an individual be estimated by the real pain that he suffers from it, I beg leave to ask, whether does a man feel more severely for the loss of his purse, or for the seduction of his wife's affections. This question, I believe, need not be answered. If then that man is thought justly to deserve the last punishment, who is guilty of a rape, a robbery, or an act of forgery, to which he may have been impelled by the impetuosity of passion, or by the cravings of necessity ; how many deaths must he deserve, who, stimulated by no actual movement of nature, sits down coolly in his closet to fabricate a

system

system of unhappiness for mankind ? who, as far as he is able, encourages vice, by falsely representing it in amiable lights ; who instructs the inexperienced in its deepest refinements ; and who persuades them to the practice of it by every argument he is master of ?

I do not mean to apply what I have said to the late Earl of Chesterfield. Had he sat down, in cold blood, to give the world the lessons which are conveyed in his letters, he must have excited the contempt and indignation, not only of all people of refined feelings, but of every honest man ; and his name must have been infamous to all succeeding generations.

But it would be unjust to censure this noble author for preaching vice and immorality to the world. He did *not* preach them to the world. He preached them only to his son. He ought not to be condemned for publishing a work which he did *not* publish. And, in respect of his son, I think his letters are rather to be considered as coming from a weak understanding, than from a very wicked heart. His object evidently was to make what son happy ; and he considered vice as the means.

means. This was only wrong judgment, and a false calculation.

A celebrated book produces frequently very great effects in a country. Lord Chesterfield's rank gave celebrity to *his* book as soon as it appeared; and, I think, it would have been as dangerous a publication as ever was seen in England, if fortunately the poison did not contain its own antidote. The morals are too bad: they revolt. The reader is shocked with seeing a father act almost as pander to his son. And if he has any degree of understanding or knowledge, he soon gets a contempt for his author, because he sees he is a *flight* man.

He has written with elegance, and he certainly had parts; but they were neither of the first, second, third, nor sixth order*; and I will venture to affirm, that if his book had not been *nobly born*, it would not have had the smallest success. But birth is a *real* advantage, though few *philosophers* think so.

Can any man shew me a single page in his four volumes which announce a superior writer? I will venture to say, he cannot,

* I speak only from what appears in his Letters.

cannot, one. Can any man mention a single letter, which, being translated into a foreign language, and appearing without a name, will support itself at Paris, at Berlin, or at Rome, by the weight and depth of its sense, by the beauty of its images, by the elevation or delicacy of its sentiments, or, by that weakest of all pretensions to literary merit, the brilliancy of its wit? I shall venture to answer, not a letter in his whole collection.

His principles of politeness are unexceptionable; and ought to be adopted by all young men of fashion; but they are known to every child in France; and are almost all translated from French books. In general, throughout the work, what is *new* is not good; and what is *good* is not new.

LETTER XV.

LORD Chesterfield's object for his son was to establish him at St. James's. To arrive there, he was first to be a minister abroad. To qualify him for that, he was to acquire foreign languages, have extensive knowledge, and a good address. Those general views were just; and one point he surely deserves praise for: he stopped at no expence that he thought necessary for the improvement of his child.

The first wish of his soul was, that Mr. Stanhope should be clever; and he trusted him to a tutor who was a perfect mediocrity. One half of a man's talents depends upon education; and an able governor will almost create parts in a pupil. It is at least certain, that he shall so far improve natural gifts, that it shall nearly appear creation. There must be parts to draw out parts.

Here then was the first capital error his Lordship was guilty of. His next great points that he wished to accomplish were to make his son an elegant speaker, and a

graceful dissembler. Mr. Harte was awkward in his manner, ungraceful in his elocution, and knew very little of his own language, as appears from several passages in the Letters in question. I mean nothing less than to reflect upon this gentleman. He was a man of probity and learning. I only mean that he was totally unfit for what appears to have been Lord Chesterfield's principal aim. It is well known how much more prevalent example is than precept; and this Nobleman sent a tutor with his son, who was to enforce *hourly* by example the direct contrary of what *he* was to teach, *once a fortnight*, by precept.

Grace and dissimulation appeared to him the two *most* essential requisites in the formation of a courtier. I believe, indeed, they were his own *forts*. But be that as it may, certain it is, he sent Mr. Stanhope to acquire them in Germany and Switzerland. Now the people of these countries are proverbially sincere; and grace is certainly not one of their shining sides.

To this you'll answer, he sent him to Leipzig to get a solid foundation; he meant that he should receive his polish afterwards. What I am now going to say

say will appear paradoxical. But if ever there was a true paradox, this is one. *Polish* must come *before* what is called a solid foundation, or it will *never* come. Examine the meaning of those two phrases. *Polish* means air, manners, and address. By a *solid foundation*, sound learning and useful knowledge are understood. Now a graceful manner and an engaging address can never be attained but at a very early period in life. When once the body has taken its *ply*, and when once certain motions, attitudes, &c. are become habitual to it, it is next to impossible to change them; the most that *can* be done is to correct them a little, but to substitute ease in the place of stiffness is absolutely impracticable. This is the only reason why the French are the most graceful people in the world, because they begin to learn grace, if I may so say, from their childhood.

As to real useful knowledge, it never can be acquired till the age of reason, which is always late. The truth is, people in writing and talking on this subject have reasoned by metaphors and similes, which, though entirely true in the points from which they are taken, are totally false in

the points to which they are applied. They reason from foundations and polish in edifices and statues, to the forming and accomplishing a man; and they make, in consequence, such confusion, as if they thought a little, would appear unintelligible even to themselves. It is very true, that the foundation of a temple must be laid before the superstructure can be embellished. It is very true, that the form of a statue must be perfect before its surface can be polished. But what has this to do with the education of a man? The building rests *on* its foundation; the polish *on* the body of the statue; but the accomplishments of a youth have not the least connection with his knowledge; as is pretty evident from the numbers of people one sees abroad, who have the finest address, and most polished manners, with scarce any information.

Knowledge and accomplishments are totally distinct. Every man thinks them both necessary for his son; and almost every man, like my Lord Chesterfield, begins by knowledge, because it is clearly the more essential of the two; and because he thinks it a basis of the other part. It is *no* basis of it: and he begins where he should

should end. Accomplishments are last in utility, but first to be acquired. Their season once passed, they can never be attained. The season for gaining knowledge, and for strengthening the understanding, never passes. From twenty-one a man may add to the force of his intellectual powers, and to his stock of ideas, till his faculties begin to decay. But after twenty no man ever converted awkwardness into grace. All this appears clear to me; and, I am pretty sure, very few of my readers will believe one word of it.

If you think I mean the cultivation of the understanding should be sacrificed to air and manner, you misunderstand me. I only mean, that if Lord Chesterfield thought a high degree of polish so essential for his son, and that it might be acquired after his solid studies were finished, in my opinion, he was mistaken.

Unless grace and disimulation appear perfectly natural, the one cannot please, nor the other succeed. And as it is impossible to acquire ease, which is the essence of a graceful demeanor, without particular attention being paid to it early; so it is next to impossible to attain perfectly the art of dissembling, unless a man is trained to

to it from the beginning of his life. To keep the thoughts close with an apparent air of gaiety and frankness, to appear perpetually off one's guard, while every look, tone, and gesture is weighed with caution ; to have the *volto sciolto* and the *pensieri stretti*, the forehead *open*, and the heart *locked*, (as his Lordship is perpetually recommending) is surely no easy science. Lord Chesterfield should have seen that the country where he learned his proverb was the country to have taught the practice of it ; and Italy, not Germany, should have been the place chosen to have formed Mr. Stanhope.

I am not examining here whether his system was good or bad. I am only shewing the absurdity of the means he used to accomplish * it. Instead of sending his son to Lausanne and Leipzig, to learn grace and dissimulation, he should have sent him to Paris and Rome †.

L E T.

* I shall shew the absurdity of the system itself presently.

† I know he was at Rome and Paris, but he went to both too late, and he only passed through Rome like an ordinary traveller.

LETTER XVI.

I BEGAN with Mr. Stanhope on his going under the care of Mr. Harte. I did not care to go a step farther back, because that would have engaged me in the old dispute, whether a public or a private education is to be preferred. The general opinion here prefers a public school; and Lord Chesterfield sent his son to Westminster. Men are imitative; and children are more so than men. I do not believe there were many good *models of grace* to be met with among this young gentleman's playfellows; and there it was that he probably contracted those habits of awkwardness and ungraciousness that he was never after able to shake off.

I have not been condemning there a public education in general. I only say, I do not think it was proper for Mr. Stanhope, or likely to have turned out to his advantage in the particular definition for which his father intended him.

I said I should not enter into the different merits of public or private educations. It is

is a subject for a book, and not for a letter. But as it is a point to which I have particularly turned my thoughts for some years, and which I have examined as attentively as I was able, I cannot resist this opportunity of saying which appears preferable to me.

The objects of education ought to be, to form the heart, the head, and the manners. I will venture to say, these three points are more surely and easily attained under the government of a moderate private tutor, than under the best schoolmaster in the world. I do not mention the cruel loss of time, nor the many other arguments which might be adduced. I shall only say, I know a hundred solid reasons against it, and not three in its favour. But the subject is unpopular, and the general opinion is against me. Locke thought as I do.

LETTER XVII.

I SHALL not presume to examine Lord Chesterfield's politics. There are already too many navigators on this ocean ; I do not wish to add to the number. Besides, I have neither knowledge nor abilities equal to it. Of all the sciences, that of politics appears to me to be the most difficult ; to require the strongest parts, the most comprehensive views, the quickest faculties, and the most varied as well as the most minute information. One difference, I think, there is between a cultivator of this science and that of any other. A politician has need of a large and elevated soul. It is not sufficient that his penetration is rapid, that his judgment is unerring, that he is possessed of that vast and happy species of imagination, which invents, distributes, connects ; which sees at once the whole and all its parts ; which puts the mass in * agitation, and gives warmth and vigour to all its dependencies.

L 5

Hee

* Mens agitat molem.

He must join to all this an elevation of sentiment, or his character is imperfect. Such a man was Lord Chatham; and many such men I hope England will produce.

I repeat it then, I shall not dare to censure Lord Chesterfield upon a system of policy, which seems to me to be pitiful and mean. I write to the young, and to them I avow my incapacity to inform them. It is only in my power to quote for their advantage, and to refer them to authorities, at least equal to this noble writer. Let them examine the systems of *Temple* and of *Sully*; they will find them, in every respect, directly opposite to Lord Chesterfield's.

All his plans turn upon art and cunning; cunning, which Lord Bacon calls *crooked* and *left-handed wisdom*; and art, which, the same great writer observes, is never used but by the *weaker sort of politicians*. “Certainly” (these are Lord Bacon's words) “the *ablest* men that ever were, have all had an *openness* and *frankness* of dealing, and a name of *certainty* and *veracity*.”

To quote poetry here may appear ridiculous; but when it is recollected that

the

the lines I am going to transcribe are almost all founded upon historical truth, and that the poet, in this speech, did little more than throw Holinshed into verse, I hope *important truths* will not have less effect, because they are presented in the language of Shakspeare.

When the good Cromwell bids his fallen master this pathetic adieu,

CROM. O my Lord,
Must I then leave you? Must I needs forego
So good, so noble, and so true a master?
Bear witness all that have not hearts of iron,
With what a sorrow Cromwell leaves his Lord.
The king shall have my service; but my prayers
For ever and for ever, shall be yours.

Wolley replies;

WOL. Cromwell, I did not think to shed a
tear
In all my miseries; but thou hast forc'd me,
Out of thy honest truth, to play the woman.
Let's dry our eyes, and thus far hear me,
Cromwell;
And when I am * forgotten, as I shall be,
And sleep in dull cold marble, where no mention
Of me must more be heard, say then I taught thee,
Say, Wolsey, that once trod the ways of glory,
And sounded all the depths and shoals of honour,
Found thee a way, out of his wreck to rise in,
A sure and safe one, though thy master mis'd it.

Mark

* Forgotten you will never be. These lines have immortalised you.

Mark but my fall ; and that which ruin'd me ;
 Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away *ambition ;
 By that sin fell the angels ; how can man then,
 The image of his Maker, hope to win by't ?
 † Love thyself last ; † cherish those hearts that
 hate thee ; .

Corruption wins not more than honesty.

Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace
 To silence envious tongues. *Be just, and fear not.*
 Let all the ends, thou aim'st at, be thy COUN-
 TRY's,
 Thy GOD's and TRUTH's ; then, if thou fall'ſt,
 O Cromwell,
 Thou fall'ſt a blessed martyr.

I love Shakspere ; and I do not love
 Lord Chesterfield. But what I am going
 to say, I say, to the best of my belief,
 without prejudice or partiality ; I think a
 young man will derive more *real profit*
 from those lines of Wolsey, and from
 Polonius's advice to his son, well under-
 stood and well digested, than he will from
 all Lord Chesterfield's Letters.

L. E T-

* Wolsey means a *vicious* ambition. This passion is one of
 the noblest of our natures ; it never becomes a vice, till it makes
 use of art, cunning, and undue means to attain its ends.

† The perpetual tenor of Lord Chesterfield's advice to his
 son is to *love himself only*. And this advice, I acknowledge,
 came very naturally from him, in his double capacity of a poli-
 tician and a man of pleasure.

† Mr. Stanhope's father would have found in this precept a
 lesson of dissimulation for his son. But Wolsey's meaning is
 pretty clear ; " Return good for evil."

LETTER XVIII.

BUT if I do not dare to arraign this Nobleman's politics; I am not afraid to attack his worldly maxims. They are bad; positively bad: I do not mean in a moral sense; but in respect of succeeding with mankind. They are weak, false, and incapable of producing their end. Like his politics, they are all founded on art and cunning. Now, I believe, it is pretty generally allowed, *in this country*, that it is beneath a man of spirit to make use of art. But since his Lordship is fond of French quotation, I will quote him a maxim drawn from a French book, of which he was very fond, and which he has recommended often and warmly to his son. He has made several quotations from this work; the one I am going to mention is not of the number; and it is worth all those that he has quoted from it. *Rien ne doit sentir ni l'art ni l'affection dans un * galant homme*, says the Abbé Bellegarde, in his treatise on the *Art of Pleasing*.

I shall

* *Un galant homme* is a man of honour; *un homme galant* is a man of gallantry.

I shall most readily grant that silly people will be duped by cunning. But was it with silly people Lord Chesterfield meant Mr. Stanhope should keep company? Certainly, no. He desires him continually to frequent men of parts, and women of understanding. He destined him for courts; and in every court there are *some* people of penetration, who not only judge for themselves, but also teach others to judge. In such societies then did this father imagine his son could succeed by cunning? Did he think that characters like those would not see the first stroke of art that Mr. Stanhope could strike? And was he ignorant that, from that instant, every one would have been on their guard against him?

As to foreign countries, I do not hesitate to assert, that in every city of Europe, from Paris to Berlin, and from Berlin to Naples, the young Englishman who attempted to practise his maxims would, instead of success, meet with universal disappointment. I shall dare for once to quote myself; and I shall venture to affirm, that the following single rule will ensure a young traveller more success, than all Lord Chesterfield's paltry maxims put together.

The

The rule is ; * *Be simple in your manners, and noble in all your proceedings.* I should not have introduced this maxim with such apparent insolence, if it were my own. Before I finish this Letter, I shall tell from whom I borrowed it.

In every city in Europe (I do not except one), who is the traveller that is best received? It is the English traveller. Why? Because he acts uniformly upon principles the direct opposites of those of Lord Chesterfield. He is natural ; he is frank ; and to the established reputation which the nation has for candour and sincerity it is, that he owes his universal success. If a foreigner of any other country is proposed to be introduced into a society, persons are strict in their enquiries about his character and principles. When an Englishman is announced, they ask not a question. Tradition and experience have both taught them he is not to be doubted of. Among the infinite numbers of English that travel, I never heard, during all the time I was abroad, but of two, who disgraced their country. They were adventurers, and men unknown.

When,

* Letters from an English Traveller, Vol. I. Letter VII.

When, therefore, an Englishman enters into a society, he has every prepossession in his favour. He must take some positive step to do himself harm. Let him address himself to any man or woman in the company, he shall be sure of a favourable reception; let him say what he will, he shall be sure of receiving polite, nay obliging answers. Every individual on the continent has a high and just idea of the merit of his nation; and will find an opportunity to tell him so in the first five minutes conversation. All will go well with him till he uses art. The French and Italians are inconceivably penetrating and quick. They doubt of him from that moment.

Art is not made for a man of honour; he has not need of it. A very fallow woman is not to be blamed for putting on rouge; it is madness to paint a fine complexion. *Seem* is Lord Chesterfield's perpetual cry. No; do *not* seem; *Be*. It will produce twenty times the effect; and is an hundred times less troublesome. Be artful and cunning, says this Lord, Do; and be despised. Be sincere and open; you will be esteemed and respected.

I have

I have already mentioned the instructions given to a young traveller by Shakspeare. How that man saw, I never could conceive; but he saw every thing. I read Polonius's advice once a week during my travels. The young man who comprehends, in its full extent, the last precept he gives, and makes it the rule of his conduct, will win the affections of *the** *deserving* every day; and, what this Letter-writer's pupil never can do, I will venture to say, he will *keep* his conquests;

This above all—To thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

When I was at Vienna, I knew a young English nobleman. In company a man has seldom an occasion to shew great parts or learning. I never had an opportunity to form a judgment of this gentleman's talents or erudition. I had not the honour of knowing him particularly enough for that. I saw him but in company: that, indeed, was generally every day for a winter. It was from observing his conduct, and the effect it produced, that I drew

* And they are the *only* people whose affections are worth winning.

drew the maxim which I have mentioned in this Letter. He was caressed and esteemed by every being at Vienna. What was *his* art? It was to have *none*; to shew himself as he was; to throw open the volume of his soul, and to say to the beholders, read: The book was beautiful; and the readers were charmed. An unassuming dignity, an amiable candour, an elevation of sentiment, and a real good-nature were the arts *he* practised; and they procured him more respect and attentions in a fortnight, than Lord Chesterfield's tricks and cunning, and all his other pitiful littlenesses, would have done in a century. He was *simple in his manners, and noble in all his proceedings*; and he had every suffrage at Vienna. I cannot help naming him. It was Lord John Clinton.

LETTER XIX.

SOMEWHAT too much of Lord Chesterfield. Permit me a few words upon his taste; and then we have done with him for ever. Of the arts, in general, it is clear, he knew nothing; so we have only to examine his literary taste.

There is little materially false or wrong in what this elegant and agreeable writer has said upon literature. But all he says is *common*. However, what we have read in twenty books, and what of consequence appears old to us, was new to the person to whom these letters were addressed; and that, I think, excuses their author.

I like to have a man write upon literary subjects; for, at the same time that he shews me his taste, he generally gives me the measure of his abilities; and I think I know the altitude of Lord Chesterfield's understanding, as well by two or three of his Letters, as if I had heard him speak an entire winter in the House of Lords. One knows a man by the people he looks *up* to. And who are the objects of Lord Chesterfield's

Chesterfield's admiration? Why Waller, Ovid, and Voltaire. This last, above all, was his hero. Now, what is Voltaire? An ingenious, brilliant, agreeable, graceful, frivolous, * false writer. I pity the man who has not a certain relish for these authors; but I think him infinitely *more* to be pitied who considers them as the first of poets; and who prefers them to Homer, Milton, and Shakspeare.

Of Shakspeare he has said but little; and not a single sentence in his favour. I have often been tempted to guess that Voltaire had instructed him in the value he was to set upon this poet. I have also suspected that the editor of his letters must have suppressed passages relative to this author. For how can any man conceive that an Englishman could write some hundreds of letters to his son, in which he should talk a great deal on literature and poetry;

* It may be thought that I have prejudices against Voltaire. The first year I was in France, when I knew him only by his bright sides, by the love of toleration, of humanity and justice, that appears in his works, I admired him both as a writer and as a man. I was one of his warmest advocates. Since I have known him better, I have changed my opinion.

poetry ; and that he should scarce ever mention the first poet of the nation, if that poet had been to his taste ?

To resume the whole of this noble author, *as appears from his Letters.* His parts, were above mediocrity ; his style, is pleasant and easy ; his ideas upon air, manners, and address, excellent ; his politics, beyond my power of judging ; his worldly maxims, false ; his taste, *little* ; and his morals, infamous.

LETTER XX.

MΕΓΑ ΒΙΒΛΙΟΥ μερια μακον : *N'est ce pas,*
Madame ? I am sure you have pene-
 tration enough to see, I do not say *all*
 upon my subjects that I *could* say. I like
 little books and short Letters. *Magis*
*necessaria omittenda quam supervacua amplect-
 enda*, remarks very wisely Velleius Pater-
 culus. But, may-be, all this learning
 frightens you : *Non temer, bel idol mio* ;
 you shall have no more of it.

P. S. It is a fine thing to be a scholar.

LET-

LETTER XXI.

I SHOULD be guilty of black * ingratitude if I did not acknowledge the obligations I have received from Lord Lucan, and from Mr. and Mrs. Vesey. To Mr. Vesey I am indebted for a thousand † politenesses to which I had no right to pretend. Lord Lucan, with that generous and benevolent warmth, which characterises his country, offered me his house on my coming to London. But Mrs. Vesey—good Mrs. Vesey—indeed she is *all* goodness—How can I ever praise or thank her sufficiently? She conferred on me the greatest of all obligations—she praised my books.

LET-

* — *quod vitium procul ab fore chartis,
Atque animo prius, ut si quid promittere de me
Possim aliud, vere promitto.*

† There is a polished good-nature in Mr. Vesey's character, which endears him to all who know him.

LETTER XXII.

WITH a *veni, vidi, vici*, came,
And he conquered the world with his row
dow dow.

I know an author as like Cæsar as—only Cæsar never conquered Britain. Now the * writer in question triumphed in London, in Paris, and in Rome—But, for God's sake, let us talk of something else; for, upon my life, the vanity of authors is insupportable.

Tant mieux & tant pis, says Sterne, are two of the great hinges in French conversation. They *do* enter into it a good deal, to be sure; and they enter here pleasantly enough into an epigram. You know the wicked poet Piron, and his malice against the French Acaderny. M. de la Condamine was deaf; and the day of his reception among

* I know the author hinted at here; and I can assure the reader, he did all that was in his power not to write those lines; but Nature was too strong for him. Do what one can, she *will* break out:

Naturam expellas furcā, tamen usque recurret.

among the Academicians, Piron circulated the following lines :

Enfin dans la Troupe immortelle
La Condamine entre aujourd'hui,
Il n'est pas muet, tant pis pour elle ;
Mais il est sourd, tant mieux pour lui.

Piron had genius, but wanted taste. His *Metromanie* is one of the best * comedies that has been written since Moliere. The unpardonable licentiousness of some of his pieces, very justly excluded him from the Academy.

As I know your palate relishes honey better than gall, I must endeavour to make you forget the epigram, by presenting you with a madrigal.

TO A BROWN BEAUTY.

Vous êtes belle, & votre sœur est belle,
Entre vous deux tout choix seroit bien doux ;
Le dieu d'amour étoit blond comme elle ;
Mais il aimoit une Brune comme vous.

P. S. Thank you for the *Modern Anecdote*. It is as light as a woman. But it is witty, pretty, graceful ; and though I never saw its fair author, I'll be sworn she is amiable. I am afraid there is a fault

VOL. II. M. against

* The *Mechant*, by Greffet, is another of the best modern comedies ; it is incomparably well written.

against delicacy of taste in the last page but one of the dedication (something about champaigne); and I believe there is another somewhere else, but I forget where.

Voltaire says, it is a proof of taste, to find a beauty where there is a number of faults; or a fault among a number of beauties. It is then to prove my own taste that I have pointed out two trifling errors, which are certainly surrounded by a crowd of prettinesses. "It was almost dark when "they returned to the castle; and it is re- "corded by a crow, who was perched "upon the top of one of the largest trees "in the avenue, that young Franzel gave "Cecil a kiss behind it." Don't you like that turn? Isn't it *pretty* and *new*?

LETTER XXIII.

TIBERIUS retired to Capreæ, as Frederick has done to Sans-souci. But the retreat of the Emperor was that of a Tyrant; the retreat of the King is that of a Philosopher.

Fid-
dle-
dee-
dee,
to fill
up the page.

LETTER XXIV.

“ **A** Frenchman,” * says the Earl of Chesterfield, “ who, with a fund of learning, virtue, and good sense, has the manners and good breeding of his country, is the perfection of human nature.” I am not an enemy to the French; but I do not think this assertion true. In my opinion the following would have been juster: *An Englishman, who joins manners and good breeding to the solidity, energy, and greatness of mind, which characterize his country, is the perfection of human nature.* I do not mean to compliment. But sentiments and actions are upon a more elevated scale here than can be found in any other nation in the world. There are no effects without causes; and the causes of this are very obvious. We pass our youth with the Greeks and Romans. Their great examples expand our souls; the brightness of their actions, and the splendour of their principles, kindle the

* Letter LXXXVI.

the most noble passions in our minds ; and, when we come to be men, the nature of our government feeds this flame, and we glow with a certain internal ardour, which occasionally breaks out into action, and which is neither known nor comprehended but in the dominions of Britain.

I do justice here to my country ; and my soul feels happy, that I am able to give her, with truth, a superiority over the universe in genius and magnanimity. But if from this I shall be understood to think meanly of the French, because they are the rivals and enemies of this nation, it would indeed be to misinterpret me much. Though I do not think that people *equal* to this in *greatness*, I think them a very great people. And if the English are superior to the French in all the more elevated qualities which dignify and enoble humanity ; so the French surpass the English in all the milder and gentler virtues, which grace and adorn it.

In England the French have few friends. But they have *one* ; and *that* one am I. They could not, I acknowledge, have a feebler advocate ; but while I have a tongue to speak, or a pen to write, wherever I go I'll do them justice.

Let

Let every man who *knows* that nation speak of it as he found it; if he lived in their intimacy for years (as I did), and if he found them ill-natured, ill-mannered, treacherous, and cowardly, let him speak his mind. I quarrel with no man who judges for himself, and who speaks the truth. But let the indulgence I grant, be granted to me again; and let me be permitted to tell the world, that, however other men may have found them, I found them good-humoured, good-natured, brave, polished, frank and friendly.

They *were* my friends faithful and just to me,
But Brutus says they are *perfidious*;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke;
But hear I am to speak what I do know.

I found them all animated with a desire to please, and always ready to do me every service in their power. I owe them a thousand obligations. I had faults; they corrected them: I wanted knowledge; they informed me: I was rough; they softened me: I was sick; they visited me: I was vain; they flattered me: I had need of counsel; they gave me the best advice: every man has need of agreeable company,

company, and every man may be sure to find it in France.

I could be lavish in praise of this nation; but I am sorry to say, that too many people here have prejudices against them, as ridiculous as they are ill-founded. They *despise* the French, as if they were beings without either sense or sentiment; though their writings and actions shew they are full of both. Because two states have different interests, is *that* a reason that every individual belonging to those states should promote, to the utmost of his abilities, the interest and glory of the country to which he belongs? It certainly is. And *therefore*, every Frenchman has the same merit in labouring with all his might for the destruction of the British fleet, that every Englishman has in exerting all *his* powers to annihilate the navy of France. If a blast of *my* breath could send all the ships she has to the bottom of the sea—Puff—They were sunk, before you could finish this period. But is it a reason I should hate or despise the French, because I am naturally and necessarily the enemy of France?

The best way, I think, to judge this matter is, to take two other rival nations;

Austria

Austria and Prussia ; Athens and Sparta. Here you are dispassionate ; your judgment will be just. Do you think it the duty of a liberal-minded Prussian to despise an Austrian ? Or, should a well-born Athenian detest a Lacedæmonian, because he is equally animated by the same noble flame that warms himself, the love of his country ? The nation which is able to rival another, proves herself worthy the admiration of that nation even by her rivalry ; and had I no other reason to consider the French as a great people, beside their being able to contend with England, that proof for *me* would be sufficient.

But the French are perfidious *in politics*. I deny that they *can* be perfidious with the English. They may be * treacherous, for

* It is the Dutch that merit these epithets. They are treacherous ; they are perfidious ; and deserve, what they possess, the contempt of Europe. They were *friends* ; they were allies ; bound to England by millions of ties. What does France owe to England ? Nothing. But what does not Holland owe her ? The part that France would take was foreseen and foretold by hundreds, long before the American war broke out. But even the penetration of a Chatham could not foresee the perfidy of the Dutch.

for aught I know, with the Austrians and the Spaniards. There they profess friendship. They are of the same religion, frequently intermarry, and have frequent alliances. With England, France has no connection. She may over-reach her in politics; but she can never deceive her by perfidy; because she is her uniform enemy. There is not an infant that does not know, that France ever was, and ever will be, the enemy of England. The making a peace is not making a friendship; and the French will not be more the friends of England when this peace is made, than they were five years before the war began; or than they are now. The rivalry between the two nations will last while the nations last. They are *littora littoribus contraria*, opposite in every thing. It is the duty of France to depress England as much as she can. It is the duty of England to keep down France as much as is in her power. It is the duty of both to do justice to the other. This justice the French *do* render the English. I am sorry I cannot say the English do the same by them. Every class of men in France praise the people of this country: some,

the solidity of their understanding, and the extent of their genius ; others, the energy and vigour of their character ; many, their magnanimity and benevolence ; and all, their courage and good faith. While here—but I blush for numbers, and am ashamed to finish my period.

LET-

LETTER XXV.

IT is incredible with what ease they kill the French in London; and the English in Paris. Admiral Rodney was killed three times in one month while I was there; once it was by a cannon-ball; another time his ship was sunk; and the third she was blown out of the water, by a red hot bullet fired by Monsieur de Guichen into her powder-room. I heard a Frenchman say to another, *L'Ammiral Rodney a été tué hier dans le Journal de Paris.* *C'est vrai,* says the other, *mais il est ressuscité ce matin dans le Courier de l'Europe.*

However, even the common people there never say any thing contemptuous against this nation, even when they imagine they have obtained a victory. Whoever relates the news, never fails to say, *Les Anglois se battaient bien*, and some one always remarks upon that, *Oui, ces Anglois se battent comme des Lions.*

Here they hold a very different language, which is impolitic as well as untrue. They diminish their own glory, when they depreciate

preciate their antagonists. An eagle has no merit in killing a thrush ; he has great merit if he kills a vulture. The truth is, there are not braver officers in the world than the French, nor men who know their duty better, particularly their engineers. If the soldiers and sailors were as good as the officers, that nation would be invincible. They by no means want spirit, for they fight very well for a short time, and are the first men in Europe for a *coup de main*. But their bodies are weak ; they are not able to support themselves long ; and I make no doubt that forty Englishmen would beat fifty of them in an engagement which lasted for any length of time. I remember a Prussian General telling me at Berlin, the French were never able to bear rain.

If you ask why the French are weaker than the English, I answer, they are more slightly made, and worse fed. If those reasons do not appear to you to be sufficient, I know no better. But I know that if there were two horses whose speed was equal for a quarter of a mile, and if one of them had more bone and finew than the other, and had been better fed from the time he was foaled, I should bett great odds in his favour if they were to run four miles.

I have

I have met many men here who say the French are not a manly people. They do not, indeed, leap five-barred gates well; nor are they famous for plunging into a river in the month of February after a fox. They are not educated to this. But I will venture to say, they face a man, and enter a breach, with as much intrepidity as any men living.

Others tell you the young men are insupportable puppies. That there are a great many of them who deserve that character, is indisputable. But they really do not possess it exclusively. I have seen in London (without flattery be it spoken) as insupportable puppies as ever I saw at Paris. In strict justice, I believe I might say *more* insupportable, for they have not near so much puppical merit as the French.

But the great clamour against them is for perfidy. I have already said, I do not think they *can* be perfidious to us. However, I give them up as Politicians. Perhaps what is said of them on that ground is true. I will not be positive. I do not *know* them as a political nation. I know them only as a *social* people; and as a *social* people they have no *equal*.

LETTER XXVI.

We must all die.

“ **I**HAVE of late, but wherefore I
“ know not, lost all my mirth, fore-
“ gone all custom of exercises; and, in-
“ deed, it goes so heavily with my dispo-
“ sition, that this goodly frame, the earth,
“ seems to me a sterl promontory; this
“ most excellent canopy the air, this ma-
“ jestical roof fretted with golden fire,
“ why it appears no other thing to me,
“ than a foul and pestilential congregation
“ of, &c.” Hamlet had the vapours some-
times. I had them yesterday. But *he* had
a reason, for he tells it to Rosincrantz.

“ **H**AM. Sir, I lack advancement.

“ **R**os. How can that be, when you
“ have the voice of the King himself for
“ your succession in Denmark?

“ **H**AM. Ay, but *while the grass grows*
“ —the proverb is somewhat musty.”

All last night I saw nothing but coffins,
church-yards, men hanging, and oceans
of blue devils floating about me. Pray,

Ma'am,

Ma'am, have you ever any of these diabolical visitations?—And what do you do to cure yourself? I'll tell you *my* secret. If the fit be a light one, I drink orangeade or lemonade, I read a lively book, take a ride, go into some public place of amusement, or into * agreeable company. If the fit is strong, and that the world and every thing looks black and gloomy, as it did yesterday—Now, I suppose, you think I take the same prescription, only doubling the dose. By no means. To dissipate very dismal images, there is no medicine so sure, as visiting a prison or an hospital, or reading Young's Night-Thoughts. At first sight, one would imagine this would increase the disorder. I answer with my life, that it is an infallible cure.

Philosophers, perhaps, will talk of *tacit comparisons*, &c. Let them find the cause; I assert the fact.

P. S. I never had the vapours all the time I was in France.

L E T-

* By agreeable company, I mean where I am flattered. I am very fond of flattery; and can bear as much of it as if I was a woman or an author.

LETTER XXVII.

WOMEN are a subject upon which so much has been said and written by so many men of abilities, that it is not easy to imagine a new light to shew them in; or to place them in an attitude, in which they have not been already placed. But, talking of a nation, if one did not say something about so considerable a part of it, the subject must appear mutilated and imperfect.

As brevity is the soul of wit, I shall be brief; and I shall only touch on the principal points in which the women of France differ from those of other countries.

When a French lady comes into a room, the first thing that strikes you is, that she walks better, holds herself better, has her head and feet better dressed, her cloaths better fancied, and better put on, than any woman you have ever seen.

When she talks, she is the art of pleasing personified. Her eyes, her lips, her words, her gestures, are all prepossessing. Her language is the language of amiableness; her

her accents are the accents of grace. She embellishes a trifle ; she interests upon a nothing ; she softens a contradiction ; she takes off the insipidness of a compliment by turning it elegantly ; and, when she has a mind, she sharpens and polishes the point of an epigram better than all the women in the world.

Her eyes * sparkle with spirit ; the most delightful fallies flash from her fancy ; in telling a story, she is inimitable ; the motions of her body, and the accents of her tongue, are equally genteel and easy ; an equable flow of softened sprightliness keeps her constantly good-humoured and cheerful ; and the only objects of her life are to please, and to be pleased.

Her vivacity may *sometimes* approach to folly ; but perhaps it is not in her moments of folly she is least interesting and agreeable. English women have many points of superiority over the French ; the French are superior to them in many others. I have mentioned some of those points in other places. Here I shall only say, there is a particular idea in which no woman in

the

* It is as rare to see *sparkling* eyes in England, as it is to see *glistening* eyes in France.

the world can compare with a French-woman ; it is in the power of *intellectual irritation*. She will draw wit out of a fool. She strikes with such address the chords of self-love, that she gives unexpected vigour and agility to fancy ; and electrifies a body that appeared non-electric.

I have mentioned here the women of England ; and I have done wrong. I did not intend it when I began the Letter. They came into my mind as the *only* women in the world worthy of being compared with those of France. To settle the respective claims of the fair sex in those two countries, requires an abler pen than mine. I shall not dare to examine it even in a single point ; nor presume to determine whether, in the important article of beauty, form and colour are to be preferred to expression and grace, or whether grace and expression are to be considered as preferable to complexion and shape. I shall not examine whether the *piquant* of France is to be thought superior to the *couchant* of England ; or whether deep sensibility deserves to be preferred to animation and wit. So important a subject requires a volume. I shall only venture to give a trait. If a goddess could be supposed

supposed to be formed, compounded of Juno and Minerva, that goddesses would be the emblem of the women of this country. Venus, as she is, with all her amiableness and imperfections, may stand, justly enough, for an emblem of French women. I have decided the question without intending it; for I have given the preference to the women of England.

One point I had forgotten; and it is a material one. It is not to be disputed on; for what I am going to write is the opinion and sentiment of the universe. The English women are the best WIVES under heaven—and shame be on the men who make them bad husbands!

As the following Letter relates only to myself, and my private concerns, the reader would not do ill to pass it: however, if he will read it, it is at his own peril.

LETTER XXVIII.

I BELIEVE I must go back to France; for there people said I had a little knowledge, and a little sense. Here I am told, in very plain terms, in print, that I am an *ignorant dunce*. But do, my dearest, worthiest brethren, tell me how have I incurred your displeasure? What have I done to excite your indignation? I never wrote against any of *you*. I never shall: not even in my own defence; though you should continue to persecute me with augmented acrimony.

A Prophet, it has long been said, never has any honour in his own country. Worthy Sirs, permit me to inform you that I am *not* in my own country, and I should take it as a very particular favour, if you would have the goodness to treat me as a stranger.

This, Gentlemen, is really the true point of view to consider me in; for I am but

but a passenger. In three weeks I quit England, never, probably, to see it again. I conjure you then, by all that is gentle and good-humoured, to let me sleep in peace for one-and-twenty days.

It is *your* cause I plead ; and not my own. When I return to Dublin, leave it in my power to say, that every other country I saw, swarmed with * low malevolent writers ; but that there was a vein of nobleness which ran through Englishmen *so universally*, that I was not able to find among them an envious author.

There is praise enough in the world for us all. You have had *your* periods of success ; or *certainly will* have them. Leave me in quiet a month ; *a little month* ; and I shall be forgotten as much as you are. What I have done, every man may do ; for, I declare to you, the greatest merit I see in myself is, that I have avoided *impiety, indecency, and personal satire.*

If you knew *all*, you would not envy me the little momentary pleasure I enjoy. *I have dearly bought it.* Nor are my successes so very brilliant as you seem to imagine. My French Letters have not had the

* I mean low in soul.

the smallest success. I have been obliged to give two shillings a volume to get some of them off my hands. I mean, that I have been forced to get them elegantly bound; and, even in their fine binding, there were people who almost refused to accept them, so universally had they heard them decried.

My Italian Book—*Tread lightly o'er the ashes of the dead.* It is fairly departed this life. But one copy of it has sold *here* in the space of ten months. Binding itself could not get that disposed of for me *.

Neither of the Tranlations has succeeded; and what have I to boast of? Why, that one poor little volume, the last I wrote, pleases a few persons of taste and parts. To succeed once in six times, is not prodigious; and if *this* happens to be received with some small degree of favour, there will still remain two-thirds of my works,

* The fate of those books would have broke my heart, I believe, if there had not been six hundred of the French Letters sold in France in four weeks; and if I had not seen in the Critical Review of January, that there was a new answer come out to the Italian Book at Paris. That was *the fourth*. There were three published in Italy before.

works, which, you see, are literally good for nothing.

I ask your pardons a thousand and a thousand times for not having entreated your indulgence in my preface. I *most humbly* entreat it now. I do not ask impossibilities: I do not seek your praise. I only supplicate your silence: I only deprecate your wrath.

P. S. I have taken advantage of that inestimable blessing, the liberty of the press, to say *civil truths* to some individuals. Others have taken advantage of it to say very *rude and cruel* * *falsehoods* against me.

* Not satisfied with calling me a *dunce* and a *fool*, they have attacked my moral character. This is carrying railing a little too far. However, I shall fight them, with the only weapons that become my profession—with moderation and patience.

It is impertinent either for me or any body else to trouble the public with the private character of an obscure individual. I shall not, therefore, trespass on the patience of my reader with defending myself. If any man should have a reason to wish to be informed of my morals, he may learn them from the Earl of Bristol, from Mr. Pery, Speaker of the House of Commons of Ireland, and from his brother the Bishop of Killala. These are known to be as virtuous characters as any in the King's dominions. They all *know* me, and *patronize* me, not for any paltry talent I may possess, but for the qualities of my heart.

me. I have not answered one. I never shall answer one. As I suppose I am frequently in error in my writings, I should be glad to receive all public and private criticisms which are not abusive; and I should endeavour to profit by them. As a writer, I think I have *some* merit; otherwise I should not publish. I may very possibly deceive myself grossly. A candid and impartial public *alone* can determine. To its decision I submit with the most perfect humility and—

O Lord! it is time to go to bed: the watchman cries Three. Gentle Reader, good night. How many *laborious creatures of us are there, at this instant, all over the world,

Sleepless ourselves, to give our readers sleep!

L E T-

* I do labour; that's certain. There is a Letter in this collection which cost me six weeks.

LETTER XXIX.

ONE night that I was at the Opera at Paris, I entered into conversation with three gentlemen that sat near me in the amphitheatre. It was in the beginning of the war with America ; and one of them asked me whether the Americans were as polished as the English ? I replied, *O mon Dieu, Non, Monsieur : Ils sont trop éloignés de la France.* He answered directly, *Monsieur, vous pensez comme un Anglois, & vous parlez comme un François.* Says the second to the third, *Il est aimable* ; and says the third to the second, *Il a de l'esprit.* My answer was only a civil truth : I did not think of it when I made it ; but I thought a great deal of its effect afterwards. There was the good will of three men gained by a single phrase.

Sterne, speaking of one or two such incidents that happened to him, says, “ It was a dishonest commerce.” What’s a dishonest commerce ? Is it truth that is dishonest ? or is it civility ? I shall never see any thing dishonest in either. Every man’s

first duty is to himself ; and that duty tells him he should speak *but* truth. His next is to his neighbour ; and that duty obliges him to be civil. By being so, he gives pleasure ; and every innocent pleasure does good. Suppose a man has an equal opportunity of saying an agreeable or a disagreeable truth. What is his duty ? By all means, to suppress the unpleasing one, and to say the other. Is there any law of God or man against saying a civil truth ? I know of none. Is there any law of God or man against saying a disagreeable truth ? There is of both. It is not “ doing “ as you would be done by.” The Scripture in many places enforces politeness as a duty. “ Be gentle, be patient, be “ courteous.” What are all those but so many branches of politeness ?

It is pleasant enough to bring sincerity into this account, and to consider it as violated by being joined to civility. These are indeed very singular ideas ; and, what is perhaps to be lamented, they are very common. There are many people will find flattery in my answer. They mistake. I had no view. I countenanced no vice or folly in the person I addressed ; I discharged the duty I owed to myself by speaking

speaking truth ; and that which I owed to another man by speaking civilly.

It is falsely imagined that the French are a nation of flatterers. Politeness flatters every body ; they are polite ; and in that sense of the word they *are* flatterers. But in the general bad sense of the term they deserve no title less than that *. A flatterer is no where more despised, nor more avoided, than in France. He is justly looked upon as a mean, and as a designing character. If they are convinced he has an honest soul, he is considered at best as an insipid man. It is the phrase of the country, “*C'est un adulateur, un homme fade.*”

Are then disagreeable truths never to be spoken ? Never, but when a person's positive opinion is demanded ; and then

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* In Letter XXIV. speaking of the French, I said, “I was vain ; they flattered me.” I wrote that phrase only to anticipate the reader's epigram. I was sure, if I did not make it, *he* would.

When flattery encourages vice or folly, or means to deceive, it is odious. When it means only to give innocent pleasure, by saying agreeable truths, it then becomes a virtue. It is the grand *elixir vitae* ; a real cordial to the soul ; and a better cure for the vapours than ever was discovered by any physician from Hippocrates to Heberden.

the direct truth should be pronounced in as soft words as the language will afford.

You may ask, perhaps, if I really thought the French the models of politeness. I really *did*, and really *do*. Every country that I saw appeared to me to be polished in proportion to its nearness to France, or in proportion to its imitation of French manners. Milan, for example, is infinitely more polished than Naples. And Vienna, within these last twenty years, as I was well informed on the spot, has improved infinitely in manners as it has adopted the usages of the French.

P. S. I like your style; it is natural and spirited; neither naked, nor loaded with ornaments.

L E T-

LETTER XXX.

MANY people say travel is useless; many more say it is pernicious. I never knew any person who had travelled an enemy to travel; and I do not think that any one else can judge.

But what can be the use of it, say they? May not a man eat, drink, sleep, perform all the animal functions of life, and be a very honest worthy character, without ever visiting France or Italy? He may; not only without seeing Italy or France, but without ever learning to read.

The principal objection is, that a young man's morals will be corrupted. Were this assertion to be advanced by an inhabitant of a village in Switzerland, or by a father in a very remote provincial town of England, who never meant that his son should quit the place of his birth, I should readily acquiesce with him. But to imagine that there is more vice in any capital in Europe than there is in London, is indeed a very mistaken notion.

The

The three chief rocks on which youth is wrecked, are women, wine, and play. A drunkard is a character unknown in France. If a man, only flushed with liquor, came into company, the men would look coldly on him, and the women would not speak to him. That door would never be opened to him again. Drinking is considered as a vice so low and disgusting, that it is held in contempt even by the common people. That vice then a man could never learn there. If he were unhappy enough to be addicted to it, and had any sense of shame, travel would be a very probable means to cure him.

I have known Englishmen abroad lose a great deal of money at play; but nine times in ten it was playing with Englishmen. If a man has that vice constitutionally, and brings it from home with him, he will seek houses of play; which, by the way, are infinitely less numerous there than here. If he seeks bad company, he may find it every where; and if he gets into a playing set in France, he may be sure to be plundered without mercy. Pretty women and deep sharpers (some of them men of rank) labour together to heat his head,

head, while they keep theirs cool; and when they deprive him of his understanding, which they always effect by one means or another, they massacre him without compassion *. But I repeat it, these houses are scarce, and no man will get into them that does not seek them.

To say the truth, in point of gaming, the English corrupt the French, rather than the French the English. Witness horse-racing which they have introduced among them. Gaming, indeed, is a national vice in England; the common people are continually making bets; and it is a trait by which an Englishman is remarked abroad, that when he is pressed in an argument, he always supports himself by *Je parie que si*; to which a Frenchman, who has not generally so much money to risk, answers with a gentle air, *Non, Monsieur, Je ne parie pas.*

As

* Pray, said an Italian to me, did you ever play? Yes, formerly.—Did you lose?—Almost always.—Well, says he, I will give you two rules, which will prevent your ever losing again. First, never play with people you don't know; and, secondly, never play with people you *do* know.

I recommend this Italian's *two* rules to every young traveller with all my soul; but by play, I do not mean games of commerce with women of fashion.

As to women—I must tell a story upon that: I was one night at a supper in Paris, where there was a German Baron just arrived from his own country. He was pretty dull, and very pert; and a Wit who understood to *persifler* him, and to divert the company at his expence, asked him, among other questions, “Pray, Sir, are there any women in Germany?” The Baron answered with grave eagerness, that there were a great many. I think one might ask the same question of a person who objected to a young man’s travelling for fear of the fair-sex; “Pray, Sir, are there any women in London?”

Do I then assert that there is no danger from women abroad? I do *not*. Do I assert that there is *little* danger from them? I *do*. Danger, like every thing else, is relative; and I do affirm very positively, that a young Englishman will be in infinitely less danger from French or Italian women, than he will be from English women. What the reason of it is, I shall not pretend to say; but it is a certain truth, that young Englishmen in general do not like the women of France or Italy. They do not care to have any commerce at all with the Italian women, and very little

little with the French. As far as I could observe, they agreed much better with the Ladies of Germany.

Pleasing in conversation abroad depends on two points: one, expressing agreeable ideas with ease and elegance; the other, relishing the delicacy of wit, and of expression of the person with whom you converse. In these two articles, the young traveller is totally deficient. He has never thought of looking for agreeable ideas; he expresses himself with difficulty; and he never thinks of the language of the person who speaks to him. He looks only for the idea. The idea will often be common, good for nothing; but there will be a *finesse* and a grace in the expression of a French-woman, that will charm a man of the country, and which a foreigner scarce ever feels. Their conversation then soon becomes disagreeable to each other; their tastes in every thing are opposite; and so long he will please, and so long only, as he supports himself by dint of presents. This is a mortifying commerce, and it soon disgusts him.

In all this I have supposed a young man his own master, which no young man ought to be. If he has a person to take

care of him, who knows his duty, it is next to impossible that he can get into any vice, unless he was corrupted before he left home, or unless he is naturally very ill-disposed.

I always keep my strongest argument for the last ; and I mention now, in support of what I have advanced, *positive fact*. I assert that young Englishmen are *not* corrupted by travel. Let any man recollect, among the number of his travelled acquaintance, what they were before they went abroad ; and what they were at their return. He will see on that survey that there is not one in a hundred who has not been a positive * gainer ; and among the very small number who have miscarried, he knows that they were not well-disposed before they left home. I declare, that during the time I was abroad, I knew and heard of near three hundred Englishmen, of whom there were but two that misbehaved,

* I could name several young Englishmen who did honour to their country abroad, by their morals and manners, and who all profited considerably by travel ; as, Mr. Pelham, Mr. Yorke, Lord Herbert, Lord Graham, and Lord John Clinton. I saw many others, but these appeared to me the first in merit, as well as the first in rank.

haved. They were both dissolute before they left England ; one of them particularly addicted to wine ; the other to play. I do not wish to mention any name disadvantageously ; and I wish less to mention theirs, because they were both men of high rank, and are neither of them now living.

That there is now and then a man corrupted in foreign countries, is what I believe ; that the number is exceedingly small, is a point of which I am firmly persuaded. I do not, however, decide on this more than on any other subject. I assert positively only what fell within the compass of my own knowledge ; for the rest I appeal to every man's experience.

LETTER XXXI.

AND the advantages of travel, what are they? They are many and great. First, virtue and honour are out of the question. If a man has not his principles fixed before he travels, he will never have any during his life. No man was ever sent abroad to learn proper sentiments. Every person well born is supposed to have those inculcated into him from his infancy. When he looks on the world with the eye of a man of sense, he will be confirmed in his good principles, for he will see in every country in Europe, that a man of honour and virtue is esteemed and respected, and that a vicious character is avoided and despised.

The great objects of travel are to form the manners, to acquire knowledge, to strengthen the judgment, and to refine and enrich the imagination. A young man, by being in company of people of the highest rank, Princes and Princesses, Kings and Queens, acquires a habit of respectfulness and ease, a possession of himself,

himself, and a degree of polished attention for others, that renders him highly amiable and interesting. Politeness is not one of the cardinal virtues; but it is the very first of those of the second order. It is, if I may so say, the younger sister of Humanity, and contributes infinitely to the happiness of society. In a certain degree it resembles Mercy; “It is twice blessed; “it blesseth him that gives, and him that “takes.” Every one feels a pleasure in giving pleasure to others; and what pleases all the world more than being treated with politeness?

Life is crowded with sorrow and calamity. Can a man have too many sources of innocent pleasure, to sooth his sufferings, and to render his pilgrimage here as little painful as possible? The pleasures of the senses cannot always be gratified. How happy then to be able to enjoy those of the imagination! There are few men who do not feel a certain pleasure in looking at a beautiful horse. If then a man can acquire a degree of pleasure in looking at the picture of that horse, does he not multiply his enjoyments? A taste for the arts can scarce be acquired but in Italy; and every new taste is a new source of delight.

The
number

number of beautiful images, both from art and nature, with which a man enriches his fancy, is incredible to those who have not seen Rome and the kingdom of Naples.

I need not say any thing in favour of a taste for Letters; for there is no country in Europe in which classical learning is so justly or so highly esteemed as in England. If then Greek and Latin merit ten years attention, surely French and Italian merit some months. But they, you will say, may be acquired here. To a certain degree, and with much time and labour, they may. But do you think that a Frenchman can get as just an idea of Milton at Paris, or an Italian of Shakspeare at Rome, from reading those poets with some forlorn outcast of England, as he could at London, after he had learned to speak the language, and had an opportunity of conversing on what he had read with persons of taste and knowledge? Believe me, a man will understand Racine and Tasso by six months reading and conversation at Paris and at Rome, better than he would by so many years study of them at home; and much better than it is possible

possible for him ever to understand Homer and Sophocles.

As the fancy can only acquire polish and delicacy from contemplating a variety of images; so the judgment can only obtain a certain degree of accuracy and strength from repeated comparisons. A man cannot have but by travel such a number of occasions for exercising his judgment, nor in so short a space of time. Every day gives him new ideas; every conversation rectifies some notion in his head. Books give some knowledge. But clear and certain knowledge is not to be had but by experience. An author never can give but partial ideas. It is impossible for him to present every face of a subject, be his talents what they may. If he attempted it, he must be minute to a degree that would kill his reader; and even after that, his labour would be vain. The thing is impossible. I never read a description that gave me a just idea of the thing described. My fancy worked upon my author's words. I formed an image to myself. I saw the object after. My image was always false. I read my author over again; he had said nothing but truth. Twenty volumes written on Mount Vesuvius,

Vesuvius,

Vesuvius, would never give a man so clear an idea of it as a morning's excursion from Portici. The Bay of Naples and St. Peter's church cannot be described. No man without living with the French can have an idea of French politeness.

As to having a just notion of the character of a nation, I defy any man breathing to collect it from books. Some general positive ideas he may have ; particular ones he cannot. Nations are discriminated from each other by shades and tints, that evade the power of language. The French are a mild people ; the Italians are a mild people. No two ideas differ more than French and Italian mildness. The Italians are reserved, the English are reserved. Yet light pink-colour does not differ more from crimson, than the reserve of an Englishman does from the reserve of an Italian. What is the difference ? Let those describe it that can. I can not. It is a tint, a shade ; language cannot paint it. It must be seen, to be felt ; and when it is felt, it cannot be described.

LETTER XXXII.

BUT it is useless to dispute, unless we agree on principles. Do you admit that this line,

“ The proper study of mankind is man.” contains just and solid sense. If you do *not*, there is an end of our argument. If you *do*, I may safely affirm that a man learns to know the world better by a few years travel, than he can by a number of years spent at home. At home his faculties often sleep; abroad they are always awake. The great variety of characters that pass through his hands, keeps his parts continually in exercise. He is perpetually studying even without thinking that he is studying. The variety of comparisons he has occasion to make, gives a surprising quickness and justness to his discernment. He lives much in little time. He acquires experience early and with ease. He learns to set a just value upon men, and to distinguish their different degrees of merit. Every hour lets in new light on his mind.

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He judges to-day ; he finds to-morrow his judgment was erroneous. That teaches him diffidence of himself ; and makes him less hasty in determining again, and more acute in seeking surer grounds to decide on, than those he had believed before to be sufficient. He finds a tone, a change of countenance, a sudden word, to be surer indications of a man's insides, than long set speeches, or laboured dissertations. He learns to judge when a man is natural, and when he is acting a part. He learns to read the soul through the eye, and to interpret the language of silence.

If all this be true, say you, travellers ought to be prodigies. All this *is* true, but Nature furnishes materials for few prodigies. My assertions go no farther than to say, that natural faculties are brought to their highest degree of perfection in a quicker and surer manner by travel than by any other human means. And if it be certain that the perfection is quickened, the combining and comparing powers strengthened, the judgment rendered more solid, the imagination more vigorous and active, the taste refined, the manners polished, and the understanding stored with new and clear ideas, I believe
that

that is sufficient to make us conclude, that every *man of * parts*, who is able to afford it, ought to make the tour of Europe.

It has not been my intention to enumerate *all* the advantages of travel; but only to throw out some loose and rapid hints of what struck myself most strongly. Many superior writers have treated this subject with depth and elegance; and if you desire more particular information, I must refer you to them.

L E T.

* The word *parts* is a plural. It implies a number of singulars; which I take to be perception, judgment, memory, imagination, powers of combining and comparing, &c. As imagination is the rarest, most shining, and most delightful of these several powers, by a *man of parts* is generally meant, a man who possesses this single faculty in an eminent degree.

It is pretty evident that those who are peculiarly gifted by nature will gain *most* by travel; but every man of good common sense, who wishes to improve himself, will profit amazingly by it. I do not dare here to advance so violent a paradox; but I am firmly persuaded in my own soul, that one may give almost any man parts by *Education*, EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION.

LETTER XXXIII.

A Young traveller ought to see, that is, to dwell on, only the capital works of every kind in every country he visits. The French and Italian languages are full of books. He ought only to read the best writings of the best authors. The number of pictures in Europe is infinite; he ought to study about a hundred of them. Statues are also in crowds; he should examine fifty of them with attention. The same in every thing else. But the grand point for him is company. It ought to be confined to two classes; people of a certain rank, and persons of merit. If he does not do all this precisely as it is written here, it is positively either his own fault, or his governor's.

A great deal indeed depends upon the governor. All useful and elegant knowledge is surrounded by a quantity of rubbish. It is a governor's duty to clear away this rubbish, and to save his pupil the disagreeable task of toiling through it himself.

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That procures a double advantage to the pupil ; he learns quickly, and he learns with ease. To instance in Letters. Corneille, Racine, and Voltaire have written a number of plays. There are about fifteen of them worth reading. The governor should point out those fifteen. The same in Sculpture and in Painting. He should know how to produce his pupil in company, to support him in it, and to set his best qualities in their most favourable point of view. If he cannot do this, a governor is rather a clog than an advantage to a young nobleman ; and a faithful domestic, who would be attentive to his master's health, would be *as* useful, and *less* expensive.

But you will say, will people of rank and men of superior talents be troubled with a raw young traveller ? That, I answer for it, they will in every town in Europe ; and I speak from experience. They will think his company no trouble, but a pleasure. They will receive him with open arms, make allowance for his inexperience, load him with caresses, and think themselves happy to polish his manners and enlighten his understanding. And what do they demand on his part ? Nothing but plain civility,

lity, a modest deportment, and a marked desire to seek their company, and to improve by it. I repeat it, I speak from experience: I saw a number of young travellers of different nations, and I saw every society, both of the great, and of men of letters, receive them all in proportion to their merits. Youth has so much in its favour, and foreigners are so amiable, that it is absolutely every man's own fault, and more particularly an Englishman's, who does not succeed in their society. I say, it is more the fault of Englishmen than of any other travellers, if they do not succeed, because there is not a country in Europe that is not prejudiced in their favour*.

I dare

* I have already said that the reputation which the English have established abroad, for integrity and honour, makes people never hesitate about receiving them into their houses. When they condescend to be a little amiable (which by the way does not always happen) foreigners are flattered even to pay their court to them. I remember at Rome, ten or a dozen Princes and Princesses, and indeed all the first people of the town, used to come to Lady Lucan's once a week during her stay there. And at Naples, Lady Hamilton used to be courted by the first Nobility, though she very seldom returned any

I dare not mention so insignificant an atom as myself, nor should I presume to do it, were it not to render justice to the goodness of the persons who loaded me with civilities abroad ; and to prove how little merit is necessary, to be well received. I had not youth to recommend me ; I had neither a splendid rank, nor an ample fortune ; I was awkward and ugly : I had no single merit but that of being a well-natured character, and of shewing a desire to please, and to improve myself ; and I was received, I may say, with distinction, by the first societies, and by some of the first Personages in Europe.

Bon Ton is a complex idea like beauty. It consists of a number of parts. One of the most essential of these parts is language. As French is universally spoken, it is necessary for a young traveller to learn to express himself with some degree of choice and

any of their visits, on account of the weak state of her health. It was not on account of the superior talents of these Ladies ; because Lady Lucan paints, and because Lady Hamilton plays on the harpsichord, better than any two women in Europe ; it was simply because they were *English* Ladies, and shewed a desire to know the people of those two cities.

and elegance. Marmontel's Tales are the best book in the language to teach him *that*; it is the purest French, and nearly the language of the best company. Three months application to some of the best writers, under a proper person, and a good dancing-master to teach him a plain unaffected bow, will enable him to present himself with modest confidence in any society. Every visit then will encrease his stock of knowledge and of ease; and he may be sure after to make his tour with profit and *eclat*.

Every traveller should begin with Paris, and end with Paris; because he will there find the best masters, the most enlightened men, and the most polished people. It is the spot of the world where a man will best learn to render himself amiable. And does that appear to you to be of little importance?

I could say a great deal in favour of travel, but I am not fond of exhausting my subject. One idea more I will mention, and that shall be the last. When an English traveller compares France with Italy, Holland with Switzerland, and Austria with Prussia, and gets a just notion of the positive and comparative worths of these

these several nations, he will then compare them with his own country, and he will see upon what rank England stands in the scale of nations. He will then see what is the value of an individual in any given country. He will see what it is in his own. And *then*, and not *till* then, he will know his rank in the scale of beings ; he will find that his early prejudices in favour of his country were founded upon truth ; and, feeling his soul elated with a noble pride, he will exult in his superior dignity, and bless God that he was born an ENGLISHMAN.

F I N I S.



